



Windy, cooler 51/33 • Tomorrow: Partly sunny, breezy 43/31 **B6**

Democracy Dies in Darkness

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1, 2025 · **\$4**

## As Russia wobbles, its leader swaggers

Costly war, inflation, low births complicate Putin's year-end boast as savior

BY MARY ILYUSHINA

When Russia's first democratically elected president, Boris Yeltsin, resigned on New Year's Eve in 1999, he publicly implored Vladimir Putin, his handpicked but little-known successor, to "take care of Russia."

A quarter-century later, Putin insists he has done just that — and more.

As he wrapped up his marathon year-end news conference on Dec. 19, Putin boasted that he had thwarted efforts by the United States and its Western allies to subjugate Russia after the Soviet Union fell apart.

"I have not just taken care of it, but I believe we have stepped back from the edge of the abyss," he declared, in response to a question about Yeltsin's remark.

"I have done everything so that Russia can be an independent and sovereign state that is capable of making decisions in its interests," Putin said, "rather than in the interests of the countries that were dragging it toward them, patting it on the back, only to use it for their own purposes."

But as 2024 drew to a close, Russia was in a far more precarious place than Putin's rhetoric and bravado suggest. His forces are making slow but steady advances in Ukraine, but estimates by some NATO countries suggest hundreds of thousands of Russian troops have been killed or wounded in the war, which has dragged on for nearly three years.

Part of Russia's Kursk region is  
SEE PUTIN ON A11



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL S. WILLIAMSON/THE WASHINGTON POST

## D.C. violent crime declines from 2023 spike

City on par with other urban centers after reduction in lawlessness that left residents feeling besieged

This article is by Peter Hermann, Olivia George, Emily Davies, Keith L. Alexander and John D. Harden

Violent crime in D.C. receded last year, reversing a generational spike in killings and robberies in 2023 that rendered the nation's capital one of America's deadliest cities and thrust it into a presidential election cycle as an avatar for dysfunction.

Documented killings and shootings each were down roughly 30 percent, District data shows, part of an across-the-board drop in crime categories that brought D.C. in line with other major urban centers after a year spent as an outlier. Most crime dropped below pre-



FROM TOP: A suspect is taken into custody last month by D.C. police. The suspect was being pursued earlier by Cmdr. Michael Pulliam, above, who supervises the Robbery Suppression Initiative.

pandemic levels, with the exception of homicide and carjackings, police statistics show. Recorded killings in the District fell to 190 in 2024, from 274 the year prior.

The 2023 spike in violence left residents feeling besieged and fueled President-elect Donald Trump's public derision of D.C. as "a nightmare of murder and crime." Mayor Muriel E. Bowser's administration had pursued more aggressive crime-fighting strategies and she touted progress to staffers for Trump, who in his first term

SEE HOMICIDES ON A4

Pr. George's: Md. county again tops 100 homicides for year. **B1**

## Nippon casts new bid for U.S. Steel to wary Biden

BY DAVID J. LYNCH AND JEFF STEIN

Nippon Steel proposed giving the U.S. government a veto over any reduction in U.S. Steel's "production capacity" in a last-ditch bid for President Joe Biden's approval to acquire the venerable American steelmaker, according to a document sent to the White House on Monday.

The proposal is aimed at mollifying the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), which warned last week that Nippon Steel's \$14.9 billion takeover of U.S. Steel could lead to a decline in domestic steel output that would pose "risks to the national security of the United States."

The president has publicly opposed the takeover for months, leaving him at odds with many of his advisers who favor the deal, according to two senior administration officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

Biden is siding with David McCall, the president of the United Steelworkers union, who has blasted Nippon Steel's bid as "bad for workers" and questioned the company's commitment to U.S. Steel's unionized operations.

As White House deliberations  
SEE U.S. STEEL ON A5



MATT MCCLAIN/THE WASHINGTON POST

Jimmy Carter's niece Kim Carter Fuller is comforted by pastor Ashley Brock Guthas during a vigil at Maranatha Baptist in Plains, Georgia, on Monday. The former president attended the church.

## Carter's tiny hometown in Georgia mourns a neighbor and a friend

BY JIM LYNN AND HOLLY BAILEY

PLAINS, GA. — To the world, he was a former president and global humanitarian. But here in this quiet Southern town, Jimmy Carter was something altogether more — a Sunday school teacher, a friendly neighbor, a trusted friend, someone who felt like family.

Carter, who died Sunday at age 100, spent much of his life in Plains, a tiny speck of a place about

2½ hours south of Atlanta, where a dozen or so blocks of post-Civil War homes and buildings sit surrounded by miles of flat, sweeping farmland. That includes the famed peanut fields that burnished Carter's humble beginnings and forged his political identity as a small-town farmer who sought to be a champion of everyday Americans like those with whom he had grown up.

Tributes poured in Monday from around the world honoring Carter, winner of the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize, for his postpresidential work on

SEE PLAINS ON A8

Reconciliation: Carter made peace with rivals. **A6**

## At auction, a token of one family's royal past

87 years after his killing, Ethiopian noble's heirs seek to reclaim his medal

BY PAUL SCHWARTZMAN

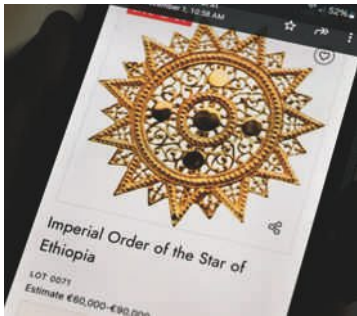
The solid gold medal is referred to as the "Imperial Order of the Star of Ethiopia" and is touted for having once belonged to Emperor Haile Selassie's fabled son-in-law, a noble executed by Italian troops nearly 90 years ago.

Yet whether the star is authentic is at the center of a heated dispute between its owner, a European medal designer who recently sought to auction it off, and the grandchildren of Ras Desta Damtew, the Ethiopian commander who is said to have worn it on his chest before he died.

A descendant of Ras Desta in late November saw the medal listed on an auction website, which claimed that it came "from the estate of an Italian soldier who was present" when fascists captured and killed the commander in 1937 during the second Italo-Ethiopian war.

"WHAT!!!!!!?????" Tenagne Haile-Mariam, a cousin of Ras Desta's grandchildren, texted them Nov. 26, five days before the auction. "Can we stop this!!!!!!?????"

The cousin's alert triggered a



MICHAEL S. WILLIAMSON/THE WASHINGTON POST

Northern Virginia is home to relatives seeking the medal.

frenzied international campaign to recover the decorative medal, a quest led by Ras Desta's heirs, who live primarily in Northern Virginia and New York. They enlisted a London-based lawyer who specializes in recovering looted art and Ethiopian officials who, along with the family, insist the medal belongs in their home country.

"We were enraged," said Laly Kassa, Ras Desta's granddaughter, standing in her spacious living room in Annandale, Virginia, with her sister, Kokeb. A small gold frame on a nearby table held a photograph of a young boy who grew up to become their great-grandfather, Haile Selassie, Ethiopia's monarch until he was deposed in 1974 and later killed.

The Kassa siblings are offended that someone would seek to profit from the sale of a medal that the auctioneer touted as

SEE MEDAL ON A12

## IN THE NEWS

**9/11 cases** An appeals court ruled that the government's controversial plea deals with three men accused in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks can proceed. **A9**

**End of the road** The Circulator, a bus service that had operated in the District for 19 years, reached its final stop. **B1**

**THE NATION** Judges are under greater threat of violence, intimidation and disinformation, the chief justice warned. **A2** **Riders reminisced** as New York phases out its R46 subway cars. **A3**

**THE WORLD** The U.S. amplified its attacks on Houthis in Yemen, the latest salvo in a year-long effort. **A9** **With illness**, rifts and scandal, 2024 was another annus horribilis for Britain's royals. **A10**

**THE ECONOMY** Resolving to improve your finances? Look beyond dollars and cents, The Post's Michelle Singletary suggests. **A13** **The United States** has imposed sanctions on Russian and Iranian entities over their efforts to interfere in the 2024 election. **A13**

**THE REGION** D.C. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser said she had a "great meeting" with President-elect Donald Trump in Florida. **B1** **The District's** longtime nonprofit animal rescue partner will hand off the city's shelter and animal control services to a Delaware group. **B1**

**STYLE** The List, a Post tradition since 1978, is here once more. Take a look to see what's in and what's out for 2025. **C1**

**FOOD** Two programs in Wyoming encourage hunters and gardeners to donate meat and produce to local pantries.

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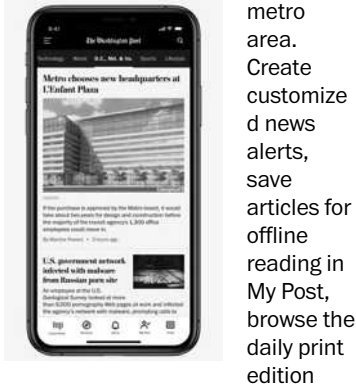
CORRECTION

• A Dec. 30 Page One article about the death of Jimmy Carter incorrectly referred to the location of voting irregularities when Mr. Carter ran for the Georgia Senate. The problems were noticed in Quitman County, Georgia, not the city of Quitman, which is in a different county.

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# Chief justice warns of threats against judges in report

## Roberts said intimidation makes ruling impartially a more difficult task

BY JUSTIN JOUVENAL

Supreme Court Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. on Tuesday warned that judges nationwide are under increasing threat from violence, intimidation, disinformation and officials threatening to defy lawful court decisions.

Roberts said that robust criticism of judicial rulings is part of American civic life, but that some recent attacks had gone too far in threatening to undermine the independence necessary for judges to rule impartially.

“Violence, intimidation, and defiance directed at judges because of their work undermine our Republic, and are wholly unacceptable,” Roberts wrote in his annual report on the state of the nation’s judiciary.

The justice’s message follows a large jump in threats against judges and other public officials, as the nation’s polarized politics have taken an increasingly acrimonious turn. The U.S. Marshals Service reported that threats against judges have tripled over the last decade, and they investigated more than 1,300 incidents in 2022.

The Supreme Court has come in for harsh public criticism — and sometimes threats — in recent years, following contentious decisions and a string of controversies over the ethics of the justices.

Roberts did not mention the court’s recent rulings or ethics controversies in his year-end message, but he did lament the killings of state judges and family members of federal judges in recent decades as examples of the rising dangers facing judicial officers.

“These tragic events highlight the vulnerability of judges who sign their names to the decisions they render each day and return home each night to communities, where they remain involved as neighbors, volunteers, and concerned citizens,” Roberts wrote. “Judges cannot hide, nor should they.”

Roberts also warned of tactics



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

**Supreme Court Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. released his annual report on the state of the nation’s judiciary. Public trust has remained near record lows across the political spectrum.**

that fall short of violence, including disappointed litigants urging people on the internet to contact a judge, others releasing judges’ personal information and activist groups posting the locations of judges for the purpose of protests.

Roberts did not mention public officials by name, but he said some had tried to undermine rulings by falsely claiming decisions were motivated by political bias. He also wrote that disinformation about rulings — often spread on social media — was a major problem requiring more civic education.

The Supreme Court is at a crossroads after facing a turbulent year and on the eve of what could be another as President-elect Donald Trump takes office.

During 2024, the court issued much-debated decisions granting Trump and other presidents broad immunity from being prosecuted for official acts, allowing Trump to remain on the ballot in Colorado as a presidential candidate in the November election, and curbing the power of federal agencies.

The court also faced more ethics controversies.

Politically charged flags adopted by some Jan. 6 rioters that

were flying outside the homes of Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. prompted questions about his impartiality. A report released in December by Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee revealed undisclosed jet and yacht travel by Justice Clarence Thomas that was paid for by Texas billionaire Harlan Crow.

A second Trump term is likely to pose fresh tests for the court. Trump has pledged to deport large numbers of immigrants, impose crushing tariffs on foreign goods and fire thousands of federal workers. Those moves are likely to be challenged in court and could ultimately land before the justices.

Michael J. Gerhardt, a professor at the University of North Carolina School of Law, said the boundary-pushing nature of Trump’s policy objectives could be a point of tension with the high court he remade by appointing three conservative justices during his first term.

“The court will be receptive to a lot of what the Trump Administration wants to do, but it’s not going to be wholly captive,” Gerhardt said.

Gerhardt said he expects the 6-3 conservative supermajority on the court to continue to

aggressively push the law rightward. He said the contours of the court’s jurisprudence — restricting abortion, expanding the role of religion in public life and checking the power of federal agencies — have become clearer after several terms.

“This court is on a mission . . . Its mission is to rework constitutional law,” Gerhardt said.

The court could decide a major case involving TikTok in the coming weeks. The justices will rule on whether a law requiring the popular social media platform to divest from Chinese ownership or be shuttered in the United States violates the First Amendment rights of users.

The weighty issues come as a recent Gallup poll showed public confidence in the judiciary as a whole has collapsed — setting the United States apart from other wealthy nations. The poll found that 35 percent of Americans have trust in the courts, down from nearly 60 percent in 2020.

Lydia Saad, Gallup’s director of U.S. social research, said the decline was striking because the poll has found similar drops only in countries experiencing economic or political crises, such as Myanmar’s return to military

DIGEST

NEW YORK

### Woman burned in subway is identified

The woman who died after being set on fire in a New York subway train this month was a 57-year-old from New Jersey, police announced Tuesday.

The woman, Debrina Kawam, apparently moved to New York only recently and was briefly in a city homeless shelter, the

Department of Social Services said. It did not say when.

Police had an address for Kawam in Toms River, a community on the Jersey Shore, and authorities said they notified her family about her Dec. 22 death.

Prosecutors have said the victim was asleep on a subway train that was stopped at a station in Brooklyn’s Coney Island when her clothes were set ablaze by a stranger, Sebastian Zapeta.

Zapeta, 33, allegedly fanned the flames with a shirt, engulfing her in the blaze, before sitting on a platform bench and watching as she burned.

Zapeta has been indicted on murder and arson charges. He has not entered a plea.

Federal immigration officials say Zapeta is from Guatemala and entered the United States illegally.

Prosecutors have said Zapeta subsequently told police that he was the man in surveillance photos and videos of the fire



DAMIAN DOVARGANES/AP

**Workers secure the outside of a Target store in downtown Los Angeles on Tuesday after two security guards were shot and wounded after confronting a man suspected of shoplifting.**

being ignited but that he drinks a lot of liquor and does not know what happened.

He is currently jailed, and his next court date is Jan. 7.

— Associated Press

rule in 2021, Venezuela’s economic implosion and the civil war in Syria.

The poll did not directly ask respondents why they lost trust in the judiciary. Saad said the data indicates the sentiment stretches across the political spectrum and was probably driven by the high-profile prosecutions of Trump, including his conviction in a New York court on 34 counts of falsifying business documents. Many Republicans thought those prosecutions were political.

Saad said Democrats’ disaffection may have to do with the Supreme Court’s decision to grant Trump and other presidents broad immunity from prosecution for official acts and to allow Trump to remain on the 2024 presidential ballot in Colorado. Saad said she also thinks delays and dismissals of some of Trump’s prosecutions could have frustrated the left.

“It appears that initially Republicans were driving the decrease possibly because of their disagreement with criminal charges and the cases against President Trump,” Saad said. “But more recently Democrats’ confidence in the courts has also plunged, creating a double whammy.”

Separate polling by Gallup also has found that public approval of the Supreme Court remains mired near record lows, with 51 percent of respondents registering displeasure with the court and 44 percent approving, as of September.

Jeremy Fogel, a former federal judge and the executive director of the Berkeley Judicial Institute, said the Supreme Court could help repair its reputation by adopting a stricter ethics code and more transparency about how it operates. The high court adopted an ethics code last year, but it has been criticized for lacking an enforcement mechanism.

“It would be great for the chief to identify some positive things the Court could do to try emphasize the importance of its institutional reputation,” Fogel said. “I think it’s important that the court be an exemplar of high standards and appropriate conduct. A significant majority of the public doesn’t believe that’s the case today.”

WASHINGTON

### Flight turns back after fumes in cockpit

A Hawaiian airlines flight bound for Honolulu was forced to return to the Seattle airport shortly after takeoff due to reports of fumes in the cockpit, according to the Federal Aviation Administration.

Hawaiian Airlines Flight 21, an Airbus A330, took off at about 1 p.m. Monday from Seattle-Tacoma International Airport carrying 273 passengers and 10 crew members.

The Port of Seattle Fire Department did not find any smoke or smell, an airport spokesperson said. Flight 21 left Seattle on Tuesday morning in a new aircraft, according to airline spokesperson Marissa Villegas.

— Associated Press

MICHIGAN

### Couple die days apart after accidents

A suburban Detroit husband and wife have died days apart after separate accidents between Christmas and New Year’s Day.

Scott Levitan, 66, was removed from life-support at a hospital Tuesday afternoon after falling through the ice while fishing on a small lake north of Detroit on Thursday, according to the Oakland County Sheriff’s Office.

About 24 hours after that mishap, Mary Lou Levitan, also 66, was killed in a traffic accident. Investigators believe she was on her way to pick up her husband’s vehicle at the time of the crash.

Scott Levitan and his 15-year-old grandson were drilling a hole when the lake ice gave way Thursday in Addison Township, the sheriff’s office said.

Scott Levitan fell into the water. His grandson called 911 and also fell into the lake while trying to rescue his grandfather. A nearby resident was able to pull the teen back onto the ice.

Mary Lou Levitan was a rear-seat passenger in a vehicle that was struck head-on Friday by another vehicle that crossed the centerline of a road in Oakland County.


The Levitans lived in Livonia, west of Detroit.

— Associated Press

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POLITICS & THE NATION

Riders reminisce as New York retires iconic subway cars

Longtime passengers say old seating arrangement fostered community

BY KARLA MARIE SANFORD

NEW YORK — Growing up, Alvaro Hernandez always ran for the window seat on the subway. His older brother sat in the seat next to him, and his parents sat in the seats immediately perpendicular to them both, so they could watch them.

This seating arrangement encouraged subway riders to engage with one another, Hernandez said.

“Everyone would talk about what they’re going to do, what they’re going to cook,” he said, referring to summertime F train excursions to Coney Island. “And they’d invite you to where they were going to be.”

New Yorkers are celebrating a seating arrangement — and its memories — after the Metropolitan Transportation Authority recently announced the imminent replacement of the R46 fleet.

“The change that’s happening now with this new sort of move away from the kind of conversational to the long-bench seats, and actually more standing room, feels a little bit seismic for people because it is,” said Concetta Bencivenga, director of the New York Transit Museum.

Delivery of the latest order of the replacement car — the R211 — is expected in 2027. It is unclear when all of the R46 cars will be retired, but riders are sounding off on social media.

Some are lamenting the ability to get cozy in duo-seaters with their boo. Some regret that they can no longer isolate themselves in the corner seat window. And others, like Hernandez, will miss the scenery as the train eclipses the underground and heads south aboveground toward the beach.

“I used to love it when the subway would go from indoors to outdoors,” Hernandez said. “I used to kneel down and look out the window and it was like looking at my own world.”

An iconic car

To understand the significance of the R46 train car, you have to understand a bit of subway history. The New York subway system stands out for the expansive territory it covers, said Andrew Sparberg, a transportation historian and retired railroad manager.

“You would not have had the five boroughs of New York with-

out the subway system,” he said.

But what most people now know as the city’s subway system began as three distinct lines: the Interborough Rapid Transit Company (IRT), the Brooklyn-Manhattan Transit Corporation (BMT) and the Independent Subway System (IND).

The IRT, or the A division, was built for speed and would come to be the numbered train lines. One of its slogans was “City Hall to Harlem in 15 minutes,” and the trains, Bencivenga said, delivered.

The BMT and IND, the B division, were built for comfort on long day trips out of Manhattan, to places such as Coney Island or Rockaway Beach, Bencivenga said. These lettered trains were wider and longer, and they featured seats against the windows — longitudinal — and perpendicular to the windows — transverse.

“They were really built to be a little bit more conversational,” Bencivenga said.

The R46, a 50-year-old B division train car, is in service on the A, C and N, R, Q, W lines; 696 of the original 754 cars were in service as of October. But the R46 design stems directly from the comfort cars of yesteryear — at the time outfitted with rattan seats.

“It was really a different physical relationship to the passengers,” said Mitchell Moss, a professor of urban policy and planning at New York University’s Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. “Here, you are sitting there against the wall and you’re looking out at people standing in front of you or people opposite you, where the others have much more eye contact.”

Several car models have been retired since the MTA’s inception, but the R46, with yellow and orange seats and wooden paneling, is “very iconic,” Bencivenga said.

“If you came on this with no other identifying information, if you stepped on this, you would very likely be able to surmise that you were in New York,” she said of the train. “In the real world, there are very few experiences nowadays that will kind of invoke that sort of visceral reaction, right? When you step on board, you’re like, ‘Yep, got it.’ And that’s this.”

Out with the old, in with the new

New York’s subway system has been in the headlines lately for violent incidents, including one in which a woman died after she was set on fire on an F train in December. Trouble on public transit has long been central to the story of New York: Bernhard



MARC A. HERMANN/METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

New York’s R211 subway cars, like the one seen above, offer more space for standing riders and are designed to streamline passenger circulation. Many New Yorkers, however, say they will miss the familiar R46 car, below, that is being phased out.



JEENAH MOON FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Goetz’s shooting of four young Black men in a subway car became a worldwide flash point in 1984; Daniel Penny’s fatal choking of Jordan Neely led to outrage in 2023. But for many

New Yorkers, the joys of a mundane ride eclipse those infamous moments.

For Hernandez, 54, the train car reminds him of dance-battling crews during the early years of hip-hop. On the weekends, he and his friends from Brooklyn would ride around the five boroughs, looking for kids to break-dance battle. Everyone had a different job in a crew, he explained. There was always the guy carrying the boom box. One would carry the drinks and the munchies for the long trip. His job, he said, was to carry the backpack full of spray paint for

graffiti.

Timmhotep Aku, 45, another native New Yorker, also associated the R46 with a sense of nostalgia.

“Riding the train with girlfriends and sitting smushed together in the back-to-back ‘love seats’ will always have a place in my heart,” he said.

Star Navarro, 25, said he likes the “retro style” of the car and dislikes the overall push toward “sleek and modern,” which ruins the atmosphere on the train.

But while New Yorkers may feel nostalgia for the look and feel of the classic car, in this case,

experts say, the new cars really are for the better good.

The R46 is not reliable, Sparberg said. The R46 has less than half the reliability rating considered “good,” he said, and nearly a quarter’s worth of the railcar that’s replacing it, according to the MTA.

Even more important, Moss said: New cars introduced to the train system will be a lot more information dense. According to an MTA news release, the new cars will feature security cameras in every car, more accessible seating, brighter lights, clearer signage and wider seats.

“Before, because people were looking at the advertising, they were looking at each others’ newspaper headlines, there was more visual connectivity on the train among the passengers,” Moss said. “Now, each person is a self-contained producer and consumer of their own information, but they are more connected to the outside world, which I think is very important for emergencies.”

Sparberg agreed, saying the audio and visual elements will increase accessibility on the new trains. Bencivenga explained that the longitudinal seats in the R211 will allow for more standing room and streamline passenger circulation — measures meant to decrease the “dwell time” the train is stopped at the platform and ultimately produce a more efficient ride.

But who’s to say the R46’s retro-cool design might not circle back into fashion?

After all, the open gangways of the R211 were first sported in the 1925 Triplex a century ago.

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# Homicides, carjackings down after deadly surge in 2023

HOMICIDES FROM A1

threatened to take over the District’s police department.

Some District leaders, including Bowser (D) and D.C. police chief Pamela A. Smith, credited the decline in part to changes in policing and a roll back of the progressive-minded laws enacted by the D.C. Council in the aftermath of the murder by police of George Floyd in 2020.

The council in response to surging violence passed Secure D.C., a sprawling public safety package that stiffened punishments for crimes ranging from retail theft to gun offenses, eased restrictions on police pursuits and allowed judges to detain more people facing charges before their trials. The return of “drug free zones” and the launch of a nerve center to expedite intelligence gathering enhanced crime-fighting, Smith said at a news conference.

The goal, Smith said, is to “get our community back to a place where we can feel safe again.”

But for all the intense focus on restoring safety — including from Congress, which blocked local legislation for the first time in 30 years — reasons for the drop are complex and debated among criminal justice and city leaders. Some, including the District’s attorney general, questioned whether the tough-on-crime legislation had any impact. Statistics show violent crime began falling in late summer 2023, months before Secure D.C. passed.

At a news conference, Bowser scoffed at questions about the impact of District actions.

“When crime goes up, blame the mayor,” Bowser said. “When crime goes down, certainly the things put in place couldn’t have anything to do with that.” She said “people being held now and going to trial are the ones using guns in our community. They’re not in the community, and gun crime is going down.”

Other problems confronting the administration of justice will persist into the new year. A surge in arrests and charges stemming from 2023 helped to fuel backlogs in the judicial system amid nine D.C. Superior Court vacancies. The population at D.C.’s troubled jail complex surpassed 2,000 for the first time in five years. Police staffing, though increasing, remains at a half-century low. And carjackings, while dropping nearly 50 percent in 2024 compared with 2023, were still well above pre-pandemic numbers.

The killings in 2024 marked the lowest number since 2019, when the District saw 166 homicides in the year before pandemic shutdowns upended daily routines, the public safety apparatus and the social safety net. Wards 7 and 8 again bore the brunt of the city’s violence in 2024, accounting for nearly 60 percent of the District’s recorded homicides.

Last year’s list of killings includes a college student struck by bullets fired at someone else during a dispute at a New Year’s party and a woman’s body found in discarded refrigerator, hidden behind a wall of concrete. Two 14-year-olds were killed in 33 hours, one found dead in a park, the other shot on a Metro platform in Brookland. And a 3-year-old struck by a stray bullet in Southeast. Two months later, her 2-year-old friend was wounded by a stray bullet while sitting in a stroller outside her day care.

In all, 526 people were shot as of early December, down from 751 during the same period in 2023. Sixteen youths under the age of 18 were killed, including five infants beaten, suffocated or poisoned, District data for 2024 show.

Homicides also dropped in at least three major suburban D.C. counties, Fairfax in Virginia and Prince George’s and Montgomery in Maryland, though they still topped the 100 mark for the fourth consecutive year in Prince George’s. In Fairfax County, authorities said preliminary numbers shows that violent crime rose slightly overall.

D.C.’s crime trends reflect drops in many other cities across the country, with homicides down through November about 28 percent nationwide, compared with the same period in 2023, according to a Washington Post analysis. It is the third consecutive-year decline following a surge in killings from 2020 through 2022, the height of the pandemic. In 2024, D.C.’s per capita murder rate fell from fifth to sixth highest in the country, behind such cities as New Orleans, Detroit and Baltimore.

David Muhammad, executive director of the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform, has served as an adviser on crime in several cities and is working with the District on its proposed gun violence reduction plan. He said the police department seems “better organized and focused,” under Smith, who ascended to the top



MATT MCCLAIN/THE WASHINGTON POST



ASTRID RIECKEN FOR THE WASHINGTON POST



MICHAEL S. WILLIAMSON/THE WASHINGTON POST

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: “Drug free zones” in areas such as Salvador Saucedo-Guzman’s Trinidad neighborhood have made a difference when it comes to crime rates. “You see the muzzle flash,” Marina Bronstein, a police officer with rank of investigator, said as she keyed up a video recording from a surveillance camera near a shooting, at the Real-Time Crime Center in Washington on Dec. 19. D.C. Police Chief Pamela A. Smith, left, with Mayor Muriel E. Bowser, third from left, at the Metropolitan Police Headquarters in Washington on Dec. 9.**

job in summer 2023 amid a crime crisis and low staffing, and with little experience in local D.C. politics and running a large city agency.

He said he had not yet seen significant evidence of Secure D.C.’s impact but hailed improved cooperation among violence interruption programs and progress at the city’s People of Promise initiative, which pours targeted resources at the two hundred or so people believed most likely to be a future victim or a perpetrator of homicide. The program struggled as it launched in 2022, with officials failing to reach most of those deemed at risk, but Muhammed said it is “now quietly taking hold, with a whole team of people really focused on the individuals with the highest risk of gun violence.”

D.C. Council member Brooke Pinto (D-Ward 2), who chairs the public safety and judiciary committee, pointed to Secure D.C., which she sponsored, when asked what caused the sharp decrease in violent crime.

“We are seeing the results,” she said in an interview.

The lawmaker highlighted a provision that made it easier for judges to hold people charged with violent offenses pretrial, helping to end what had been seen as a revolving door from arrest to release, often within a day. She also said that part of the bill allowing police to collect DNA from suspects at the point of arrest helps solve cases quicker.

Pinto said she is committed to improving the city’s violence intervention efforts, which consist of employing community members to spot conflicts and defuse them. She said she wants to see the two such programs — one operating under the mayor, and the other under the independently elected D.C. attorney general — merge under the mayor. D.C. Attorney General Brian Schwalb (D) said he is open to collaboration.

The city’s top prosecutor, U.S. Attorney Matthew M. Graves, also credited Secure D.C. for leading to more aggressive arrests and prosecutions. He said his office has prosecuted more 16- and 17-year-olds as adults, judges are handing down longer sentences and police

are getting more training so that evidence they collect at crime scenes stands up in court.

Graves, who said Monday he is resigning ahead of Trump’s inauguration, said his office will continue to target “the drivers of violence,” such as people authorities believe are “involved in multiple shooting incidents.”

D.C. Council Chairman Phil Mendelson (D) attributed the drop in violent crime in part to an increased prosecutorial rate, in part to police focusing on repeat offenders, and in part to a confluence of sociological factors playing out across the country that he said are hard to parse out. He dismissed the idea that changes to local laws directly led to the decrease in violent crime.

“We, meaning society, do not have a clear eye on why crime trends go up and down,” Mendelson said, adding that he plans to pursue legislation requiring the mayor to establish more cohesive violence interruption intervention and hire civilian investigators to investigate cold cases and property crimes, freeing up sworn officers to focus on violence.

Schwalb, D.C.’s attorney general who prosecutes juvenile offenders and some low-level adult crime, said police and prosecution should be just part of the solution.

Crime prevention and addressing its root causes, such as poverty and joblessness, he said, plays “a

pivotal role if we are to make the city a safer place.”

In an interview in December, Schwalb said it is “not a time for a victory lap or to be self-congratulatory” over the crime drop. “The residents of the District want us to remain focused on doing the work, and focused on results,” he said, noting that by the time Secure D.C. passed in the first quarter of 2024, the city was “already well on its way to reducing crime.”

The work, for Smith, involved deploying resources more strategically, she said at a news conference. A homicide reduction task force focused on high-violence areas got results, she said, with killings in those zones dropping 67 percent over 2023.

So, too, has the department’s new Real-Time Crime Center. The hub, staffed with police and civilian investigators, monitors safety issues across the region, from potential national threats to pickpockets, and launches investigations even as officers respond to a call.

On a recent night in late December, the crime center got the alert for a shooting in Southeast Washington’s Anacostia neighborhood as calls started coming in to 911.

“You see the muzzle flash,” Marina Bronstein, a police officer with rank of investigator, said as she keyed up a video recording from a surveillance camera — one of several hundred police have in

the city — near the shooting that had occurred moments earlier.

Three people could be seen running from the blasts on Maple View Place. A vehicle peeled away.

At neighboring desks, other investigators pulled video feeds from nearby streets, trying to track its path out of Anacostia. All they had at first was a partial description of a blurry vehicle.

“Which direction is he traveling? Where’s the next camera we have?” said Cmdr. Matthew J. Fitzgerald, who runs the crime center. “Maybe we’ll get a better shot of it at the next camera. Then we get a tag, and all of a sudden we have a suspect.”

All of a sudden, they did.

U.S. Park Police officers spotted a vehicle that seemed to match the description and gave pursuit. Officers in the D.C. police helicopter Falcon, with new high resolution cameras, monitored from above and saw a gun tossed into an alley. Bronstein, in the crime center, called back people who had called 911, hoping for more leads.

The vehicle crashed into a parked car next to a playground in Lincoln Heights in Northeast, four miles from the shooting scene. Police found the gun and made an arrest. Authorities quickly linked it to an earlier shooting in Maryland that wounded one person.

In 2023, it could’ve been hours before a detective could search out surveillance video, watch it, and act.

“Historically, that car would be gone,” Fitzgerald said.

Smith has said the implementation of measures such as temporary “drug free zones” and loosening of some policing reforms have allowed officers to be more effective. Seen by some as throwback to tactics that helped to drive mass incarceration and fuel police overreach during the nation’s failed War on Drugs, police say they are now seeking to disrupt the drug trade rather than arrest their way out of it — and they promise mental health and drug treatment services as officers fan out in areas known for violent crime.

In his Trinidad neighborhood in Northeast Washington, Salva-

dor Saucedo-Guzman, chairman of the community’s Advisory Neighborhood Commission, welcomed the arrival of the orange signs posted to street poles and posts, proclaiming in big block letters: “WARNING. DRUG FREE ZONE.”

“Bad actors see those signs and they know not to come by,” he said.

“This is a hotbed. It has been for decades,” Saucedo-Guzman said in an interview, as he walked along a stretch of Mount Olivet Road. “Shootings, robberies, stabbings. Anything you can think of.”

Police said they set up at least 89 such zones across the city in 2024, five in Trinidad, each lasting five days, yielding a total 13 arrests for crimes that include assault and drinking alcohol in public.

Saucedo-Guzman said he hasn’t heard concerns about officers being heavy-handed. “We want to see long-term impact,” he said. But he said he’s seen no evidence of the promised social workers. The D.C. Department of Behavioral Health said in a statement that they “routinely conduct outreach in areas that are declared Drug Free Zones,” to connect people with treatment for mental health or substance abuse issues. The agency did not provide statistics.

On a walk through Trinidad, Saucedo-Guzman greeted Saleem Abdullah, sitting on the steps of a squat brick building, across the street that used to be a service shop for dump trucks but is now a boxing gym. “I’ve got to make sure everything stays straight,” said Abdullah, 63, who runs the gym. “Don’t want no guys hanging out front here, smoking drugs.”

The gym — its walls plastered with fliers for upcoming fights, photographs of Muhammad Ali and a certificate for a “depression coping skills” course Abdullah completed in prison — is something of a haven.

“Outside, it can be a hell hole. Shooting, fighting, drugs,” he said. “But they know not to come over here.”

Meagan Flynn, Michael Brice-Saddler, Emma Uber, Jasmine Hilton and Dan Morse contributed to this report.



MICHAEL S. WILLIAMSON/THE WASHINGTON POST

**A gun found inside of a crashed car that had been involved in a police pursuit at 14th and R sts. NW in Washington, on Dec. 19.**



# Nippon Steel sends Biden new offer in bid to buy U.S. Steel

U.S. STEEL FROM AI

continue, administration officials for the first time are considering an approach that would leave a final decision to the Trump administration, said the two administration officials and an industry executive who also spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Biden, who faces a Jan. 7 deadline for a final decision, could condition approval of the takeover on Nippon Steel complying with a set of additional requirements, such as the preservation of American jobs, one of the administration officials said. Hammering out those details could push the matter past Inauguration Day.

U.S. Steel's share price rocketed almost 14 percent on news of the latest developments, before closing up 10 percent.

In its new proposal, Nippon Steel offered a 10-year guarantee that it would not reduce production capacity at U.S. Steel's mills in Pennsylvania, Indiana, Alabama, Texas, California and Arkansas without approval by the Treasury-led review panel.

The Japanese company offered a similar pledge regarding a mostly idle mill in Granite City, Illinois, which would last for two years, according to the document, a joint letter to CFIUS from the companies that was seen by The Washington Post.

The new language goes beyond Nippon Steel's previous agreement to limit any production cuts to those approved by independent members of U.S. Steel's board, who would be appointed subject to CFIUS approval.

Even with the new conditions, U.S. Steel's actual output could rise or fall in line with customer demand.

But to maintain "production capacity" — or ability to produce a given amount of steel — for a full decade, Nippon Steel will need to invest "many billions of dollars" in addition to its existing commitments, according to a person familiar with the company's thinking, who was not authorized to speak about the matter.

Nippon Steel has already pledged \$2.7 billion in new investment for U.S. Steel's unionized operations in Pennsylvania's



QUINN GLABICKI FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

U.S. Steel's Clairton Coke Works on the Monongahela River in Clairton, Pennsylvania. President Joe Biden faces a Jan. 7 deadline.

Mon Valley and in Gary, Indiana.

Coupled with Nippon Steel's promise to rule out layoffs or closures of any unionized facilities for the duration of the current union contract, which expires in September 2026, the new proposal effectively places the burden of adjusting to any future economic downturn on U.S. Steel's nonunionized operations in Arkansas, the person said.

"By providing assurances against reductions in production capacity — which assurances will be legally binding and enforceable by the U.S. Government — Nippon Steel is underscoring the ironclad nature of its commitments to U.S. Steel and its union-represented employees," the com-

panies' Dec. 30 letter said. "By contrast, without this Transaction, given limited resources, U.S. Steel will revert to its pre-Transaction strategy of deprioritizing existing, union-represented facilities."

The companies' revised "national security agreement" was addressed to White House Chief of Staff Jeff Zients, White House Counsel Ed Siskel, and Andrew Fair, the acting assistant treasury secretary for investment security, who coordinates the internal CFIUS process.

"We received the CFIUS evaluation and the president will review it," said Robyn Patterson, a White House spokeswoman.

Since announcing its planned

purchase of U.S. Steel in December 2023, Nippon Steel has been engaged in an awkward courtship of the steelworkers union. But in recent weeks, as a deadline loomed for final government action, the relationship has deteriorated into open hostility.

McCall, who backed an alternative bid by rival steelmaker Cleveland Cliffs, accused Nippon Steel of planning to shift work from U.S. Steel's unionized blast furnaces to a nonunion facility in Arkansas. And he pointedly complained that Nippon Steel has a history of dumping, or selling below production cost, foreign steel in the United States.

McCall on Tuesday dismissed Nippon Steel's latest initiative.

"Both U.S. Steel and Nippon have been deliberately misleading in their public statements and communications to our members, making splashy — but ultimately unenforceable — claims about the future of our facilities," he said in a statement.

Nippon Steel has fired back in its communications with CFIUS, saying in December that McCall sought to leverage his political relationship with Biden to kill the deal. The steelworkers union endorsed Biden in 2020 and 2024.

"Mr. McCall has made clear from the beginning his intent to use his relationship with President Joe Biden to subvert the CFIUS process and block the Transaction," attorneys for the

two companies wrote in December.

The steelworkers union also is split over the sale of U.S. Steel. While McCall and other top officials remain implacably opposed, rank-and-file union members who work in some of the aging mills that the Japanese company has promised to modernize are supportive.

The union and management are at odds over prospects for U.S. Steel if the Nippon Steel deal collapses. McCall has argued that the company can survive on its own. But David Burritt, U.S. Steel's chief executive, said in September that the deal's failure would put "thousands of good-paying union jobs at risk" and could lead to the company relocating its Pittsburgh headquarters to another state.

Nippon Steel also improved its proposal by agreeing to "ensure U.S. Steel has sufficient resources" to support any future U.S. government trade complaints against foreign steel producers. The pledge came in response to a Dec. 14 CFIUS letter, which said that U.S. Steel — once owned by a Japanese company — "could reduce its participation in U.S. trade remedy investigations and reviews."

In a third change, Nippon Steel offered to appoint a "full-time board observer" subject to CFIUS approval, who would attend all U.S. Steel board meetings and monitor compliance with the agreement.

The Japanese steelmaker had previously pledged to appoint U.S. citizens to top U.S. Steel management jobs and a majority of board seats after the merger. But in a Dec. 23 letter, CFIUS said it was unable to reach a consensus on whether those steps would be sufficient to alleviate the government's national security concerns.

With the committee deadlocked on that issue, a final decision fell to Biden, who has publicly opposed the acquisition.

"U.S. Steel has been an iconic American steel company for more than a century, and it is vital for it to remain an American steel company that is domestically owned and operated," the president said in March.

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JIMMY CARTER 1924-2024

# Carter made enemies, then peace. Ask Ford, Kennedy, Clinton.

Famously competitive and sometimes abrasive, the Georgian had many political rivalries, but he also was determined to reconcile with adversaries

**BY MARY JORDAN AND KEVIN SULLIVAN**

During the bruising 1976 presidential campaign, Jimmy Carter called President Gerald Ford “incompetent” and his policies “morally and politically and intellectually bankrupt.”

But after Carter, a Democrat, unseated the Republican incumbent in a close race, he praised Ford in his inaugural address: “For myself and for our nation, I want to thank my predecessor for all he has done to heal our land.” Carter’s gracious words prompted a standing ovation for his recent rival.

The two men worked together on Carter’s transition to power, and began speaking regularly about issues, including reviving the economy and ratifying the Panama Canal treaty. In time, they became exceptionally close friends.

Carter did not make peace with every political opponent, most notably Ronald Reagan, the Republican who defeated him in 1980 and went on to dismantle many Carter policies, including environmental efforts to reduce the nation’s reliance on gas and oil.

But to a degree rarely seen in modern politics, Carter was determined throughout his life to reconcile with many of his political adversaries — not just Ford, for instance, but also Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, his most famous foe, who challenged him for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1980.

Sometimes Carter mended fences quickly, as with Ford. In other instances, time softened hard feelings. It was only relatively recently that he reached out to former president Bill Clinton to warm relations that had been chilled for 40 years.

Carter was complicated, a humble peacemaker as well as self-confident competitor. While other presidents tend to quietly cede the spotlight once they leave office, Carter did not, creating uneasy relations with most of the seven presidents elected after him.

“Carter wanted to be the one who says inconvenient truths that anger all the other ex-presidents,” said presidential historian Michael Beschloss.

A competitor who wanted to be No. 1 and a politician who remembered those who crossed him, Carter was also a Baptist Sunday school teacher who believed in forgiveness and that there was good in everyone.

“This is one of the most interesting paradoxes about Carter,” Beschloss said. “He had very fierce feelings about people, but at the same time, he did like to reconcile. At least in my life experience, you don’t find both of those tendencies so intensely in the same person.”

In recent years, Carter spoke about how politics was dividing Americans and he seemed more determined to attend to his own personal rifts, one at a time.

**Carter and Ford: ‘The closest bond’**

Carter was proud of his unlikely friendship with Ford and described it “as the closest bond between any two former presidents.”

The two former presidents made a pact that the one who lived longer would speak at the other’s funeral, according to Richard Norton Smith, author of a Ford biography.

When Ford died in 2006, Carter stood in front of Ford’s flag-draped casket in a Michigan church and talked about what he and his former rival shared in common: They had both served in the Navy, married strong women, raised three sons and a daughter, and were committed to their religious faith and public service. And, he quipped, “we both enjoyed our unexpected promotion to commander in chief.”

Ford had helped Carter build a relationship with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. So after Carter mediated the Camp David peace accords with Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin in 1978, the president made only one call from Marine One during the helicopter ride from Camp David to the White House: He phoned Ford. “It was a nod to the credit he was due,” said Norton Smith.

After Sadat was assassinated in 1981, it was on the 16-hour flight back to the United States from his funeral in Egypt that Ford and Carter really set aside past slights and became friends. Together, they began working on hunger, electoral reform and two dozen other projects. Their wives be-



Former presidents Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford put aside past slights and became friends on their 1981 return flight from the funeral of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat.

came exceptionally close as well, and collaborated on mental health and addiction issues.

“The four of us learned to love each other,” Carter said at Ford’s funeral, as Betty Ford nodded and Rosalynn Carter dabbed tears from her eyes.

Reflecting on their friendship, Ron Nessen, Ford’s White House press secretary, said in a 2023 interview: “It’s pretty amazing when you consider politics these days. Now there is so much anger and dislike among politicians. In those days, it was a little nicer.”

**Carter and Kennedy: ‘We were reconciled’**

Perhaps Carter’s fiercest feud was with a rival in his own party — Kennedy. The president, known to dislike profane language, was so furious when he heard that the Massachusetts senator was considering challenging him for the 1980 nomination that he vowed, “If he runs, I’ll whip his ass!”

Carter felt that Kennedy undermined his presidency and hurt his chances for a second term by positioning himself for a run for the White House.

“Kennedy really tried to coalesce all the power brokers” ahead of Carter’s arrival in Washington, Carter’s son James E. “Chip” Carter III said in an interview for the University of Georgia archives. “So we had a lot of that group against us in 1980 and it was really difficult to get them back.”

The Carter-Kennedy rift nearly turned the 1980 Democratic National Convention into a brawl and did long-term damage to the party. In a 2018 interview with The Washington Post in his hometown of Plains, Georgia, Carter was asked to look back on his presidency. He quickly brought up Kennedy.

“Sure, I have a lot of regrets,” he said. “I could have spent more time holding the Democratic Party together. I could have been more accommodating to some of the requests that Ted Kennedy made of me. But I didn’t do either one of those things. I felt in my first year, [as] I wrote in my diary, the most helpful member of the House or Senate was Kennedy for me. But then he decided to run for president and did everything he could, in my opinion, to prevent my having successes. I’m not blaming him. We were reconciled pretty well before I left Washington.”

Carter told Jonathan Alter, who wrote a biography of the former president, that he wished he had agreed to Kennedy’s request to nominate Archibald Cox — U.S. solicitor general under President John F. Kennedy and Watergate special prosecutor — for a federal appeals court judgeship.

Cox had backed Rep. Morris Udall of Arizona over Carter in the 1976 Democratic nomination contest. In his memoir, Kennedy recounted discussing Cox in the Oval Office and Carter bringing

up his endorsement of Udall, writing, “It seemed as though Carter was experiencing real pleasure in telling me that he was not going to support Archibald Cox.”

But, in one of his last acts as president, Carter did honor a Kennedy request by nominating an ally of the senator, Stephen G. Breyer, to be a federal appeals court judge. Breyer, chief counsel to the Senate Judiciary Committee that Kennedy chaired, was an architect of the airline deregulation bill, legislation Carter championed.

Days after the 1980 election that not only ousted Carter but flipped Democratic control of the Senate to Republicans, Breyer’s nomination was approved — notably with 31 Republican votes — and the Kennedy friend later served on the Supreme Court.

After Carter left the White House, Rosalynn Carter helped repair relations with Kennedy.

Rosalynn Carter and Kennedy’s son Patrick both advocated for greater public understanding of mental health. They joined forces to lobby for the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008, a law to require insurance companies to stop limiting mental health coverage and treat those disorders the same as other medical problems.

While the former first lady and the younger Kennedy, then a member of the House representing Rhode Island, were together on Capitol Hill in 2007, a large group of journalists approached. But their questions strayed from the pending mental health bill. The 2008 Democratic presidential race was heating up and reporters asked if Rosalynn Carter supported Barack Obama or Hillary Clinton, the two favorites.

Kennedy recalled that Carter avoided choosing one or the other — a headline that would have distracted from their mission to promote the mental health bill. “Mrs. Carter, without missing a beat, said, ‘I support Patrick Kennedy for president,’” Kennedy said, laughing as he reminisced about the exchange in an interview.

Kennedy said her quick answer was deft in another sense, too,

because of the irony that “she was for a Kennedy for president!”

When Ted Kennedy heard that, “he loved it!” Patrick said. “My dad could get fired up and certainly as angry as the next person. But his gift was that he always kept moving forward — he was very, very good at not holding grudges. If he had harbored every resentment that he could have in his life, he never would have made it.”

Patrick Kennedy said that he visited the Carter Center in Atlanta several times, and that Jimmy Carter always made time to meet privately with him, which Kennedy interpreted as a gesture of peace to his father.

Carter’s son Chip, in his remarks at the University of Georgia, said that when he learned Ted Kennedy had brain cancer in 2008, he told his father it might be time for the two men to “work out some of their differences — and that maybe neither one of them would get to heaven until they did.”

Jimmy Carter told his son he already had.

Despite what Patrick Kennedy called their “huge mega-clash,” Carter attended Ted Kennedy’s 2009 funeral. Patrick Kennedy said he believed Carter “wanted to make sure that he corrected in every way possible whatever it was between my dad and him. My dad was not carrying that burden of resentment when he passed on, and Carter certainly had that lifted from him by being there for my dad and being so gracious to me.”

**Carter and Clinton: ‘It is what it is’**

Bill Clinton’s often icy relations with Carter went back to Clinton’s days as Arkansas governor, a job he began in the final two years of Carter’s presidency.

In 1980, Carter sent thousands of Cuban refugees, including some with criminal records, to a military base in Arkansas. When hundreds escaped, the chaos caused by Carter’s move was widely seen as costing Clinton his reelection as governor.

During Clinton’s 1992 presidential run, he was often compared to Carter, the last Southern

governor to win the White House and derided as a failed leader after his landslide loss to Reagan. Clinton made a point of distancing himself from Carter.

“Jimmy Carter and I are as different as daylight and dark,” Clinton said in a widely reported interview at the time. “I’m much less sort of mechanical and more intuitive dealing with politics than he is.”

Though less than enthusiastic about it, Carter in April 1992 publicly endorsed his fellow Democrat’s bid to unseat Republican President George H.W. Bush.

Clinton said that support came at a crucial time, amid questions about his character, including marital infidelity and his assertion that he “didn’t inhale” while smoking marijuana. In his autobiography, Clinton wrote, “No one had ever questioned Carter’s character,” so his endorsement “more than made up for the problems he had caused me during the Cuban refugee crisis in 1980.”

After Clinton won, Carter felt he deserved better treatment at Clinton’s 1993 inauguration. He was seething when Clinton did not even acknowledge his presence at the grand gala, though the new president recognized Barbra Streisand and others there.

Still, the next year, Carter offered to meet with North Korean leader Kim Il Sung, who was building a nuclear program that could have armed the dictator with atomic bombs, and Clinton gave his blessing for Carter’s mission to Pyongyang.

But then Carter went rogue. Before informing Clinton, the commander in chief, and without giving the administration a chance to weigh in or to seek more concessions, Carter went on CNN and announced he had reached a deal.

The White House was furious, and Clinton advisers did not hide the fact that they believed the former president had been dangerously confident in his own wisdom.

Both Clinton and Carter knew it took one to forgive and two to reconcile, and they would have more ups and downs.

Carter could have stayed quiet as other former presidents did, but he publicly questioned Clinton’s morals during the Monica Lewinsky sex scandal. Still, in 1999, Clinton gave him and Rosalynn the nation’s highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. “To call him the greatest former president, as many have, doesn’t do him or his work justice,” Clinton said.

It was a blow to the Clintons when Carter supported Barack Obama over Hillary Clinton for the 2008 Democratic presidential nomination. So the arrival of the Clintons was the biggest surprise at the Carters’ 75th wedding anniversary celebration, held in 2021 at a high school auditorium in Plains. The event was relatively small, mainly family and friends, so it was significant that the

Carters had invited Bill and Hillary Clinton. But event organizers weren’t sure they would show up.

When the Clintons’ black SUV pulled into Plains on a hot July afternoon, the couple was taken straight into a small room for a private meeting with Carter, then 96, who was seated in a wheelchair.

Carter lit up when he saw them. Now frail, he reached out to hold Hillary Clinton’s hand. Bill Clinton then rested his hand on Carter’s shoulder. The couples that had started out as friends more than 40 years earlier looked like it again.

“Why did you decide to come?” a Post reporter asked Bill Clinton as he left the anniversary party. Clinton paused and addressed his turbulent history with Carter, saying, “It is what it is.”

Smiling, he said that he was glad he had come and that any differences with Carter “had never destroyed our relationship.”

**Carter and Trump: A ‘disaster’**

More recently, Carter and Donald Trump were frequent antagonists. They were not direct rivals, coming from different eras of American politics.

In 2018, during Trump’s first term, Carter said in an interview with The Post that Trump was a “disaster” and that he had abandoned the principle of treating people equally. Under Trump, Carter said, “the United States doesn’t stand anymore for human rights.”

But in April 2019, Carter sent Trump a letter about China policy that the Trump White House called “beautiful.” Trump called Carter afterward, and the Trump White House said the two agreed on China.

Two months later, however, Carter publicly suggested that Trump had actually lost the 2016 election and “was put into office because the Russians interfered on his behalf.”

During the 2024 campaign, Trump routinely made Carter the butt of jokes. At many campaign rallies, even as Carter was in hospice care, Trump trashed him and President Joe Biden together. “Joe is the worst president in the history of our country,” Trump said. “Jimmy Carter is the happiest man because the Carter administration by comparison was totally brilliant.”

Carter said he wanted to live long enough to vote in November for Trump’s rival, Vice President Kamala Harris, which he did.

Days before Carter died, Trump said he believed the United States should retake control of the Panama Canal — reversing one of Carter’s signature foreign policy moves to return ownership of the critical waterway to Panama.

On Sunday, when Carter died, Trump issued a statement saying Americans owe Carter “a debt of gratitude” because “he did everything in his power to improve the lives of all Americans.”



Carter and Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton at a 1980 campaign rally for Carter in Texarkana, Texas. Their ups and downs began that year.



# Blackout hits Puerto Rico after ‘critical failure’ of grid

Much of the island is left without electricity as the new year begins

BY BEN BRASCH

A “massive blackout” that hit much of Puerto Rico early Tuesday may keep the U.S. territory in the dark through New Year’s Eve and beyond, according to the governor and the private energy company that provides power to the island. The outage began about 5:30 a.m., when an underground power line failed, Luma Energy said. The blackout may last 24 to 48 hours. As of 1 p.m. Tuesday, crews had restored power to 44,700 customers — 3 percent of those affected, according to Luma. Two hours later, that number was 73,000 customers. Power also had been restored to two hospitals in San Juan, the capital. Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport near San Juan

used generators to continue to operate as normal throughout the day. The cause of the outage is under investigation, Luma said. Puerto Rican Gov. Pedro Pierluisi attributed the blackout to a “critical failure” and said his government was demanding solutions from the companies tasked with keeping the island’s lights on. Doing so has proved difficult. Hurricane Maria ravaged the island in 2017, creating the longest and largest major power outage in modern U.S. history. The storm and its aftermath caused nearly 3,000 deaths, including from disease, lack of access to health care and water insecurity. Afterward, Puerto Rico privatized its power grid. The island’s leaders contracted the Canadian American consortium Luma Energy to operate power lines and transmission towers, while fellow contractor Genera PR operates power generation plants. Then, in August, Tropical Storm Ernesto plunged half the island into darkness. Tuesday’s year-end blackout highlights frustrations



MIGUEL RODRIGUEZ/REUTERS

A person in San Juan shops for flashlights after much of Puerto Rico lost power Tuesday.

among Puerto Ricans about the fragility of their power system. President Joe Biden spoke by phone Tuesday night with Pierluisi about the widespread power outages and offered any federal assistance, the White House said in a statement. Biden also spoke by phone with Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm and directed her to continue to offer any assistance to speed power restoration. Pablo Hernández Rivera, who is set to take office in January as Puerto Rico’s representative in Congress, said in a statement Tuesday that he had contacted federal authorities about the issue. “Our people deserve reliable energy and a brighter future — we will not settle for less,” he said. Puerto Rican Gov.-elect Jennifer González-Colón wrote on social media Tuesday that stabilizing the island’s energy grid would be her “top priority” in office. “We can’t keep relying on an energy system that fails our people,” she said. Arelis R. Hernández contributed to this report.

# California will force insurers to cover fire-prone areas, but rates will increase

BY AARON GREGG

Insurance companies that pulled back from fire-prone areas of California in recent years will have to start covering those regions again if they want to stay in the state — but they can pass more costs on to customers. A regulation announced this week by the California Department of Insurance requires insurers to increase the writing of comprehensive policies in disaster-prone areas by 5 percent every two years up to a certain threshold. Currently, there is no requirement that insurers operate in high-risk areas at all, and some of the largest home insurers have cut their natural disaster coverage or hiked rates as climate risk grows. But in an effort to keep those firms from leaving California

altogether, regulators included a concession that the industry has sought for years: the ability to include reinsurance costs in the rates that homeowners pay. “Californians deserve a reliable insurance market that doesn’t retreat from communities most vulnerable to wildfires and climate change,” California Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara said in a statement. Lara described the rule, which was announced Monday, as part of an ambitious plan for insurance reform. Lara’s broader plan allows carriers to charge residents for the rising costs of climate change, incorporating forward-looking projections rather than just historical data, in exchange for an expansion of coverage. The rule takes effect in 30 days pending an administrative

review. Under the new rules, insurers would eventually write comprehensive home insurance policies in high-risk areas up to a level that is at least 85 percent of their statewide market share. For example, if a company holds 10 percent of policies statewide, its market share in a high-risk area must reach at least 8.5 percent, said Michael Soller, a California deputy insurance commissioner. “We’re not rewriting their business plan; we are saying these are the areas where people are hurting and where you need to be writing policies,” Soller said. The changes come after several leading insurers stopped writing new policies in the state, citing financial risk from wildfires. Allstate, for example, pulled back coverage and was

later approved for a 34 percent rate hike. The regulation effectively means homeowners will bear the cost of the reinsurance policies that insurers use to cover their own losses. Under the new rule, insurance companies can treat reinsurance like any other company expense as long as they abide by an industry standard for how much it should cost. California has been the only state that doesn’t allow those costs to be considered when insurance companies set rates. While insurance industry representatives praised the reinsurance changes, a consumer organization criticized the new regulation as a giveaway to insurers. Consumer Watchdog, a California advocacy group, said it is worried that the changes will drive up home insurance

rates by as much as 40 or 50 percent without offering a “substantive” expansion in wildfire coverage. The coverage increases required under the rule are too piecemeal compared with the increased costs for consumers, said Jamie Court, president of Consumer Watchdog. “This plan is of the insurance industry, by the insurance industry and for the insurance industry,” Court said. The reinsurance-related rate hikes cited by the consumer group took place in Florida and North Carolina based on hurricane damage, Soller said, adding that California’s new regulation was designed with wildfire risks in mind. “They’re not comparable,” he said. California has been an outlier when it comes to reinsurance

costs, said Janet Ruiz, spokesperson for the Insurance Information Institute. “The cost of reinsurance has increased, and every other state allows that you use that as one of your costs when the department is reviewing your rate increase,” Ruiz said. Allowing reinsurance to factor into rates “is one of several critically needed reforms to stabilize California’s insurance market,” said Laura Curtis, assistant vice president of state government relations for the American Property Casualty Insurance Association, a trade group. “We look forward to carefully reviewing the regulation and working with the Department to ensure it effectively improves access and availability to insurance for all Californians,” Curtis added.

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JIMMY CARTER 1924-2024



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: At the Plains Trading Post in Plains, Georgia, owner Philip Kurland sees Jimmy Carter's death as the loss of a friend. Susie Henderson holds a photograph of Carter with her parents, Mary Minion and Leonard Wright, who was a sharecropper for the Carter family. Morgan Minick paints “Thank you President Carter” on the window of Plain Peanuts and General Store.

PLAINS FROM A1

public health, the environment, democracy and human rights. In Plains, population barely 500, there were different reflections. For the first time in a century, the town awoke without Jimmy in their midst.

**‘He was just like a family member’**

Mary Minion’s life has been linked tightly with Carter’s for decades. Now 94, she is sure neither her family nor Plains itself would be remotely the same had he not remained so engaged with the town and the people here during his years as governor, president and then simply their neighbor.

“He sat at my table so many times I can’t even tell you,” she said. “He was just like a family member.”

Minion’s late husband, Leonard Wright, was a sharecropper for the Carter family. A photograph in a family scrapbook shows the two men walking together past a metal-roofed shed on the farm, Carter carrying a big watermelon on his right shoulder. He was integral in other ways, too.

Carter, Minion recounted, intervened to ensure the best care for her daughter Susie when she was hospitalized as a young girl for kidney problems. He pushed officials to make sure her children and other Black children were not skipped by school bus drivers during the early days of integration.

“The bus would come by, but they wouldn’t stop, and I asked [Carter] if there was anything he could do about that,” she said. “He and Leonard were out in the peanut farm, and I sent a note out there. We sat on the porch and talked. And he had that bus come, and it stopped from then on. One

thing or another, he was always there for us.”

And because of him, Minion’s daughter Bernstine was offered a White House job proofreading correspondence during his administration. She is now an accountant at the Carter Center in Atlanta.

No matter where “Mister Jimmy” was, Plains was never off his radar, Minion said. Like many, she is anxious about the town’s future after he is laid to rest — beside his beloved wife, Rosalynn — on their bucolic property next week. She fears the town’s economy will falter, despite the best efforts of its boosters. “I hope Plains will stay strong, but it’s not going to be as lively as it has been.”

**‘You can always see his guiding hand’**

Philip Kurland moved to Plains from Maryland more than 30 years ago to open a political memorabilia store along Main Street, and he wasn’t sure Carter, his key subject, really lived in town. But not long after, he was stunned to see the former president and his wife walk into the Plains Trading Post to welcome him — something he soon learned was a regular practice of the couple.

“When he came in here, the first thing he wanted to know was, ‘How’s business?’” recalled Kurland, 73. “Because he was very concerned about the merchants in Plains. ... He was involved in every little thing that went on here — meetings, events, everything. You can always see his guiding hand.”

Carter was soon a regular in the store, often stopping by to ask about business or talk politics. “He had a hell of a temper,” Kurland said, laughing. But their relationship was mostly “superficial” until a decade later, when Kurland caught a “superbug” from a tourist that left him severely ill and un-

# Quiet reflections on a homegrown president from the folks in Plains

able to leave the apartment he lives in above the shop.

Carter called Kurland’s wife and asked to make “an appointment” to come by, he recalled. The next day, the former president showed up at the scheduled time. “He came upstairs, we talked, we prayed together. And from that point on, we had a real friendship,” he said.

On Monday, Kurland stood solemnly behind the counter at the store, which was overrun by reporters and tourists who had descended on Plains after Carter’s death. News of Carter’s passing had left him anguished, Kurland acknowledged. It wasn’t just the pain of thinking of what might happen to Plains without Carter’s presence. It felt as though he were losing someone close to him, too.

“But it’s dawned on me today, he will always be alive in Plains,” Kurland said. “He lives on through the stories we tell of him.”

**‘His legacy of service’**

Ashley Brock Guthas was called in 2024 to be pastor of Maranatha Baptist, the church where Carter had long worshiped and taught Sunday school. And with his health declining sharply, she never had a chance to meet him. Yet if not for the former president, she never would have been offered the job, she said.

“This role I’m in would never have been possible without the influence of Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter,” she said. She is the first

woman to lead Maranatha, and she said it was Carter’s dogged support of greater roles for women in Baptist churches that created an environment where a small congregation in a tiny Georgia town would name her its leader.

“His legacy of service and of genuinely loving people as they are is something that has impacted me directly,” she said. “I think the beauty they brought to Maranatha, by welcoming the world, embracing all people of all faiths and all ethnicities, made this a better place to be and to build upon.”

When Carter could no longer teach those Sunday lessons, which always drew hundreds, weekly attendance at services dropped sharply. These days it’s down to perhaps 30 per week, if that. Some members now wonder whether the church might eventually become little but a monument to the Carter era.

But Guthas, who at 41 is in her first pastorate, remains upbeat.

“I do have a lot of hope for what is to come with Maranatha, with so many being willing to have the church be a place that welcomes the world,” she said. “We may not have the same numbers, but we truly embrace all that walk through.”

**‘This was his community’**

Phil Wise grew up in Plains as the son of a prominent physician and was shaped by small-town life, a place where you knew all the

boys your age and went to church at least once a week. Carter was his Sunday school teacher, and he didn’t preach but instead “drew you in” to important conversations about scripture and about life.

Wise went on to graduate from Georgia Tech and in 1976 became a key player in Carter’s winning presidential campaign. He joined the White House as appointments secretary; after leaving Washington, he became chief of operations at the Carter Center that Jimmy and Rosalynn founded to advance international humanitarian efforts.

Amid all the local reminiscences Monday about the interest Carter took in Plains while an elected official, Wise focused even further back. Carter’s determination to improve his hometown went all the way back to the mid-1950s, he said, after he left the Navy to take over his father’s peanut business. The young Carter pushed for better water service in Plains, the construction of swimming pools and other infrastructure improvements — then helped find ways to pay for them.

“From the early days, Jimmy Carter always had a kind of drive about him to find practical ways to make his hometown better,” said Wise, 73. “This was his community, and he never lost sight of that.”

**‘He was always someone we could go to’**

Kim Carter Fuller, Carter’s niece and Billy Carter’s daughter, works to promote the town but acknowledges the concerns over its future. “I mean, without his draw, our stores wouldn’t be so successful and the events we have wouldn’t be as successful,” she said. “People would come to these events just hoping to get a glimpse of him.”

Jimmy was always concerned about the stores here and how

they’re doing,” she said. She recalled one of the last substantial conversations she had with her uncle. Even in his failing health, “he wanted to talk about downtown and how it was doing.”

It’s widely known that the decision by Jimmy and Rosalynn to be buried locally was in part to help Plains continue to draw tourists. On the outskirts of town, his boyhood home and farm are already part of the National Park Service.

“Even in death, he’s taking care of us,” Fuller said. “We wouldn’t even have that post office over there if not for him.”

Fuller, 68, teared up when she talked about Carter’s dedication to his younger brother, her father. She remembered when Billy Carter was being treated years ago for pancreatic cancer, and she walked into the hospital waiting room as the pay phone was ringing. She answered it. Her uncle was on the line.

“He was always someone we could go to,” she said.

**‘How Great Thou Art’**

On Monday evening, Maranatha opened its doors for a silent prayer vigil to mourn the former president’s passing. About a dozen people gathered, and one by one they walked to the pulpit in the small chapel and lit a candle in his honor. A sheriff’s deputy. A woman carrying a small dog. A father with his young son. The boy cried as he lit his candle. The two then took a seat on the front pew, the father comforting his son with a hug.

Carter’s niece was there, and she broke down in loud sobs after she lit her candle. The pastor quietly approached to console her, rubbing her back.

Then only Guthas was left, sitting alone on a pew as the pianist played one of her final hymns. Her choice: “How Great Thou Art.”

PHOTOS BY MATT MCCLAIN/THE WASHINGTON POST



# U.S. amplifies strikes on Yemen’s Houthis as tensions with Israel flare

BY MISSY RYAN

The Biden administration directed new airstrikes on Houthi targets in Yemen on Tuesday, as the United States and its ally Israel struggle to halt a campaign of regional assaults by the Iranian-backed militant group.

U.S. Central Command, which oversees military operations in the Middle East, said the attacks struck targets in coastal Yemen and the capital, Sanaa, including a command node and facilities used for manufacturing and storing weapons. The operations, which also included strikes on Monday, destroyed radar positions and one-way aerial drones, Centcom said in a statement.

Video provided by Centcom showed aircraft taking off from the USS Harry S. Truman, an aircraft carrier positioned in the Red Sea.

The strikes mark the latest salvo in a year-long U.S.-led campaign aimed at halting ongoing attacks by the Houthis, a militant group that functions as the de facto government in much of Yemen, on commercial ships and military vessels in nearby waters. The Houthis' campaign has impaired global shipping and taken a major toll on U.S. allies reliant on related revenue.

The American strikes come amid an intensifying, parallel drive by U.S. ally Israel, which has launched its own series of airstrikes on Houthi targets in response to recent missile and drone attacks on Israel that, while mostly intercepted, have struck some civilian sites and have sent millions seeking regular refuge in bomb shelters.

The Houthis, a rebel faction from Yemen's northern mountains that took over much of the country a decade ago, proclaimed their maritime campaign in protest of Israel's war against Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip. Now, amid increasingly bold Houthi attacks on Israel itself, the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has promised to open a new front against the Yemeni group, which experts say has received weapons, funding and military know-how from Iran.

Experts say that while a year of U.S., British and, now, Israeli strikes has weakened the

Houthis' military capability, it has had little impact on their determination. The regional standing of the Houthis, long an obscure faction in the Arab world's poorest country, has risen as the militants portray themselves as leaders of an international resistance movement against Israel, America and the West.

Their ability to claim that mantle has grown in the past year as Israeli military operations have taken a toll on other Iranian-backed adversaries of Israel, including Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza.

U.S. officials privately acknowledge the Houthis' determination in the face of multinational attacks, and voice fears the rebels may seize on other reasons to continue their campaign even if a ceasefire can be reached in Gaza, as they have demanded.

One U.S. official, who like others spoke on the condition of anonymity to address sensitive security assessments, described the group as a "fanatical sect" which he said were in some ways more ideological than Hamas and Hezbollah.

"They want a fight and a scrap," the official said. "When we talk about them being deterrable, we have to keep that in mind."

But aid organizations are warning that recent Israeli strikes, which have struck key Yemeni transport, ports and other infrastructure, risk worsening already treacherous conditions for civilians who are trapped in a long-running civil war between the Houthis and Yemen's internationally recognized government.

In a new letter, a group of international and Yemeni groups, including Oxfam, CARE, Mercy Corps and Save the Children, said Dec. 26 airstrikes, which included an attack on Sanaa's international airport, on Yemen's main Red Sea port and on power infrastructure, threatened the ability of Yemenis to access food, electricity and medical treatment abroad.

"The consequences of attacks on civilian facilities will be severe and long-lasting for Yemeni civilians, already suffering exhaustion from a decade-long conflict," the groups wrote.

While the letter did not mention Israel by name, Israel has acknowledged the airport strike



ADEL AL-KHADHER/REUTERS

Smoke rises over Yemen's capital, Sanaa, after U.S. forces carried out a new round of strikes Tuesday.

but said it was justified because of Houthi activity there.

Mohammed Albasha, a Yemen analyst and founder of the Basha Report, said that while U.S. strikes have been more narrowly targeted on Houthi military sites

and equipment, Israeli strikes targeting infrastructure in Houthi-controlled areas have wider implications for the availability and affordability of imported goods. Albasha said recent Israeli strikes had destroyed all

tugboats that had been operating at the Hodeida, Ras Issa and al-Salif ports, meaning that container and bulk ships cannot dock and unload there.

In a U.N. Security Council meeting Monday about the

Houthi threat, Israel's representative to the United Nations, Danny Danon, vowed that the Houthis would "share the same miserable fate as Hamas, Hezbollah and Assad." Israel has staked out military positions in southern Syria following the ouster of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad by rebel forces in early December.

While the Biden administration has affirmed Israel's right to retaliate for Houthi attacks, a senior official issued a gentle reprimand on Monday at the Security Council, saying Israeli operations should not threaten civilians or civil infrastructure.

With only a few weeks before President-elect Donald Trump begins his second term and takes responsibility for U.S. actions in the Middle East, Biden administration officials are cautioning that the effort to contain the Houthis' rogue military drive must continue.

A second U.S. official said that additional military and diplomatic action may be needed from countries within and outside the Middle East. "We're all going to need to do more," the official said.

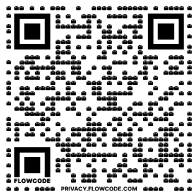
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# Pentagon’s 9/11 plea deals can proceed, appeals court rules

BY DAN LAMOTHE

The U.S. government's controversial plea deals with three men accused of orchestrating the 9/11 terrorist attacks may proceed, a Defense Department appeals court has ruled, after the Biden administration sought to thwart an agreement that would spare the lives of those who have admitted guilt in the deadliest crime perpetrated on American soil.

The unanimous decision, released Monday night by the U.S. Court of Military Commission Review, is a rebuke of Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, who intervened in the cases in August after the agreements were approved by a judge he had appointed to oversee the cases against Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the attacks' alleged mastermind, and Mohammed's suspected accomplices. At the time, Austin said he believed that the families of those killed on Sept. 11, 2001, and as a result of the ensuing wars deserved to see the men stand trial.

The appeals court ruled that while Austin had authority to restrict the judge, Susan K. Escallier, from entering into future pretrial agreements on behalf of the U.S. government, he could not rescind them after the fact. Mohammed and other defendants have already acknowledged their guilt, undermining any other proceeding against them, the appeals court found.

A senior defense official, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue, said the Defense Department, in conjunction with the Justice Department, is reviewing the ruling and considering options. The U.S. government on Tuesday filed a motion with the military commission requesting a continuance of the guilty pleas until Jan. 27 to provide U.S. officials "the opportunity to determine whether to pursue relief" in the case, the senior defense official said. A motions hearing in Mohammed's

case was to begin Jan. 6.

The appeals court's ruling upholds an earlier determination by Air Force Col. Matthew McCall, a military commission judge, who found in November that the plea deals are valid and that allowing Austin to rescind them afterward would grant him an "absolute veto over any discretionary act" reached by the officer he had appointed to oversee the cases. The Pentagon appealed that ruling within days, setting the stage for the appeals court to act.

In the plea deals, Mohammed and two other defendants — Walid bin Attash and Mustafa al-Hawsawi — would receive life in prison for admitting to killing nearly 3,000 people in an al-Qaeda plot that turned hijacked passenger jets into weapons. Two planes were flown into the World Trade Center in New York City, with another hitting the Pentagon outside Washington. A fourth crashed in a Pennsylvania field after passengers fought with the hijackers.

The three defendants remain among the most prominent of some two dozen inmates at a detention facility on the U.S. naval base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. President Joe Biden said early in his administration that he intended to close the prison, but his administration has struggled to complete negotiations with other nations to transfer inmates back to their home countries.

Late Monday, the Pentagon announced that Ridah Bin Saleh al-Yazidi had been repatriated to Tunisia, leaving 26 inmates in Guantánamo. Of those, 14 are eligible for transfer, defense officials said.

It's unclear what President-elect Donald Trump may do with Guantánamo and its inmates when he takes office this month. During his first administration, Trump forbid the facility's closure and blocked efforts that former president Barack Obama had underway to repatriate several inmates, suggesting that doing so was soft on terrorism.



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# THE WORLD

## For Prince William, the ‘hardest year’ of his life

With his father and wife ailing, his brother estranged and his uncle hit by scandal, 2024 was another annus horribilis for the royals

BY KARLA ADAM

LONDON — It’s probably a safe bet to say that 2024 was not a year on which Britain’s royal family “will look back with undiluted pleasure.” ¶ That’s the phrase Queen Elizabeth II used at the end of 1992, a year in which three of her children were caught in scandals and a fire heavily damaged Windsor Castle. ¶ Now her progeny have had another annus horribilis. ¶ Prince William, whose father and wife were diagnosed with cancer, called 2024 the “hardest year” of his life. Queen Camilla, who had her own health challenges with a bout of pneumonia, reportedly told guests at a recent event that she’d be “glad to get to the end of the year.” ¶ From serious health scares to wild conspiracy theories to (more) scandals involving Prince Andrew, the royals are probably relieved to see 2024 in the rearview mirror. ¶ Here are five reasons the past 12 months were tough for the House of Windsor:

### 1. King Charles III is diagnosed with cancer

In February, Buckingham Palace revealed that King Charles III had cancer and would be stepping back from public engagements, a bombshell announcement that came less than a year after his coronation. Charles returned to public duties in April, but with a scaled-back schedule. He is still undergoing treatment, but was more active in the latter part of 2024, including hosting the emir of Qatar and touring Australia and Samoa. Palace officials say the king will return to a more complete program of engagements in 2025.

Charles, 76, used his annual Christmas Day message to offer “heartfelt thanks” to the medical staff who offered “strength, care and comfort” during cancer treatment.

### 2. Princess Catherine is diagnosed with cancer

Catherine, Princess of Wales, revealed her own cancer diagnosis in March. Kate, as she is also called, suspended her royal duties to receive treatment. The 42-year-old mother of three released an unusually intimate video in September saying she had finished chemotherapy and was seeking to “stay cancer-free” after nine months that had been “incredibly tough for us as a family.” She has gradually returned to her public role, including hosting a Christmas carol service at Westminster Abbey.

### 3. A family photo draws scrutiny

Kate’s absence from the public eye early in the year promoted an online storm of conspiracy theories about her whereabouts and well-being. Kensington Palace released a Mother’s Day photo of Kate and her children, no doubt in an effort to quell concerns. But it had the opposite effect when news agencies asked clients to stop using the photo amid concerns it had been manipulated, a violation of journalistic standards. Kate apologized: “Like many amateur photographers,” she said in a statement, she had “experiment[ed] with editing.”

The incident provoked wider discussions about expectations of celebrity perfection and issues of privacy for public figures.

### 4. Prince Andrew’s scandals don’t go away

Prince Andrew, the king’s scandal-hit younger brother, was named in several legal disputes. In January, allegations that Andrew had sexually assaulted a teenager trafficked to him by the convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein received a fresh airing in a court case involving Ghislaine Maxwell, Epstein’s former partner. Andrew has denied any wrongdoing.

The public was reminded of the allegations again by a pair of documentaries that revisited his calamitous interview with the BBC’s



AARON CHOWN/POOL/REUTERS



PAUL ELLIS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

**TOP:** Prince William takes part in a “Together at Christmas” carol service at London’s Westminster Abbey on Dec. 6. **ABOVE:** The manipulated family photo, released by Kensington Palace for Mother’s Day, that drew media scrutiny. “Like many amateur photographers,” Princess Catherine said, she had “experiment[ed] with editing.” **RIGHT:** Prince Harry, far away, and Prince Andrew, under siege.



HANNAH MCKAY/REUTERS

TOBY MELVILLE/REUTERS

“Newsnight.” He also featured in a court case involving an alleged Chinese spy who reportedly sought to forge links with the prince to gather intelligence on British elites on behalf of the Chinese state. This incident could further diminish any chance of Andrew’s reintegrating into royal life. He was noticeably absent from the royal family’s annual Christmas Day walk to church.

### 5. Relations with Prince Harry remain strained

Prince Harry made several trips

to Britain in 2024, but the rift between Harry and his family shows little sign of mending. The day after Charles’s cancer diagnosis, Harry made a transatlantic dash to London to see his father, but they reportedly spent less than an hour together. During the funeral of Lord Robert Fellowes, Harry and William’s maternal uncle, the brothers were seated separately. When Harry visited Britain in May to celebrate a decade of the Invictus Games, he did not meet with his father, Harry’s office said, because of the king’s “full” schedule.

### DIGEST

#### BANGLADESH

##### Protesters want ousted PM to be prosecuted

Thousands of people led by students rallied in Bangladesh’s capital on Tuesday, calling for the prosecution of ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and those responsible for hundreds of deaths in a mass uprising against her government in July. The Anti-Discrimination Student Movement organized the “March for Unity” at the Central Shaheed Minar, a national monument in Dhaka. Protesters chanted slogans calling for Hasina’s trial and the banning of her Awami League party. Hasina fled to India on Aug. 5 after weeks of violence in which authorities say hundreds of people were killed and thousands more injured on orders of her government. The

uprising ended the 15-year-rule of the country’s longest-serving prime minister, who began a fourth consecutive term in January 2024 following an election boycotted by the major opposition parties.

— Associated Press

#### GERMANY

##### Man detained after 2 are attacked with knife

Berlin police said they detained a man Tuesday who attacked and injured two people in the city’s Charlottenburg neighborhood, further jolting Germany days after a deadly Christmas market attack elsewhere in the country. Police said the attacker was a Syrian citizen with residency in Sweden. A police statement called it an “attempted murder.” It said the

man attacked two men in a supermarket and on a sidewalk in front of a nearby hotel shortly before noon, allegedly stabbing them with a knife he had stolen from the supermarket. Both were taken to a hospital, and police said one was released after outpatient treatment. Berlin media outlets earlier reported that the man appeared to be randomly attacking. They reported that several passersby pounced on the attacker and overpowered him until police arrived. Charlottenburg is a normally quiet district of the German capital. Germany is still reeling from the deadly Christmas market attack on Dec. 20 in which five people were killed and more than 200 were injured in the eastern city of Magdeburg. A Saudi-born doctor was arrested on murder charges.

— Associated Press

#### ZIMBABWE

##### Law abolishing death penalty is approved

Zimbabwe has abolished the death penalty, a widely expected move in a country that last carried out the punishment nearly two decades ago. President Emmerson Mnangagwa, who once faced the death penalty himself in the 1960s during the war of independence, approved the law this week after a bill passed through Parliament. Zimbabwe has about 60 prisoners on death row, and the new law spares them. The country hasn’t executed anyone since 2005, partly because at one point no one was willing to take up the job of state executioner. Amnesty International on Tuesday described the law as “a

beacon of hope for the abolitionist movement in the region.”

— Associated Press

**Montenegro on Tuesday extradited Terraform Labs co-founder Do Kwon** to the United States, where he faces charges of having deceived investors about the stability of the TerraUSD cryptocurrency and how an app used the Terraform blockchain. Kwon was handed over to U.S. law enforcement officers and FBI agents at Podgorica airport. Kwon denies wrongdoing. The South Korean national is the former CEO of South Korea-based Terraform Labs, the company behind TerraUSD, a “stablecoin” designed to maintain a constant \$1 price, which collapsed in May 2022, roiling cryptocurrency markets. Kwon, who was arrested in March 2023 while attempting to

leave Montenegro, is also wanted by South Korea. **The chief minister of India’s northeastern state of Manipur** apologized Tuesday for months of ethnic unrest that has killed at least 250 people and prompted criticism of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s federal government. The strife between the majority Meitei and the tribal Kuki communities in the state of 3.2 million people broke out in May 2023 and has displaced 60,000 people. Despite peace efforts, many Kukis and Meiteis have moved out of ethnically mixed areas. Violence erupted after a court ordered the state government to consider extending the special economic benefits and quotas in government jobs and education enjoyed by the Kuki people to the Meitei population as well.

— From news services



# After 25 years of Putin, numbers bedevil his view of ascendant Russia

PUTIN FROM A1

occupied by Ukrainian troops aiming to use the territory as leverage in future negotiations. Last month, Lt. Gen. Igor Kirillov, the head of Russia’s nuclear, biological and chemical defense forces, was assassinated in an explosion in Moscow. The country’s sanctions-battered economy is under severe strain, with annual inflation approaching 10 percent. The Russian Central Bank last week opted to hold its key interest rate at a staggering 21 percent — only after Putin publicly called for a “balanced decision” following widespread predictions of a two-percentage-point hike.

Meanwhile, Putin’s closest ally in the Middle East, Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, was ousted from power and fled to Moscow, leaving Russia scrambling to withdraw troops and military equipment from bases in Syria it had used to project power abroad.

And on Christmas Day, an Azerbaijan Airlines jet carrying 67 passengers and crew members, including Russian citizens, crashed in Kazakhstan after suffering catastrophic damage while trying to land in Grozny, the capital of Russia’s Chechnya region. U.S. and other officials said the plane was probably brought down by Russian air defenses.

Since 2022, Putin has used his invasion of Ukraine to remake his country, building a militarized Russian society geared to confront the West for decades — revamping the education system, monopolizing culture, reshaping women’s roles and indoctrinating youths.

In recent months, these changes have only solidified. And Putin’s conviction that he will emerge victorious in Ukraine has grown stronger in the wake of Donald Trump’s election.

During his year-end news conference, Putin said his only regret was that Russia had not invaded Ukraine sooner.

The war has become omnipresent in Russian classrooms. In September, a mandatory course titled “Fundamentals of Security and Protection of the Homeland” was introduced to instill in children “a readiness to defend the Fatherland,” including training to handle a Kalashnikov rifle.



MAXIM SHEMETOV/REUTERS

**President Vladimir Putin on Dec. 19 in Moscow, during a year-end news conference and phone-in event, when he responded to a question about Boris Yeltsin’s 1999 request for Putin to “take care of Russia.” Putin said at the year-end event that he has exceeded Yeltsin’s request.**

Russian soldiers, including convicted murderers released from prison to fight in Ukraine, are invited to speak to children as national heroes.

The dream job floated to Russian youths is no longer software development. Instead, they are encouraged to pursue positions in “new and promising areas,” such as working on drone assembly lines.

“Still thinking about going to the 10th grade? Join the super elite course at Alabuga Polytechnic Institute to study aerial navigating and drone programming,” pitched an ad for a Tatarstan-based industrial hub that employs students to build Iranian-designed self-detonating drones.

The ad, depicting blond adolescent boys looking at high-tech computers in pristine white labs, targets 15-year-olds who can either complete high school or go to a trade school, skipping higher

education.

“Why should the children just learn how to wipe their school boards if they can learn how to wipe out cities from maps,” Mikhail Fishman, an anchor on the independent TV Rain channel, lamented during his year-end show, which he broadcasts from Amsterdam.

Putin, faced with a declining population and the added demographic peril of deploying tens of thousands of young men to the front lines, away from their wives, has found a new fixation: employing every possible incentive to persuade women to give birth early and often.

Government data showed that 599,600 children were born in Russia in the first half of 2024, the lowest birth rate since 1999, a figure the Kremlin called “catastrophic.”

Schools once again turned into a policy testing ground with a

new extracurricular class, “family studies,” created to “solve demographic problems.” Course textbooks teach students that women should be obedient, demonize abortion and gloss over domestic abuse to prevent divorces.

At times, the government’s desire for a baby boom has edged on absurd. In November, the parliament adopted a law to ban “child-free propaganda.”

A local version of an MTV reality show, “16 and Pregnant,” created in the 2000s, was originally intended as a cautionary tale against teenage pregnancy and drew the ire of authorities, who sought to ban it for purportedly promoting promiscuity.

That changed in 2024. The show was renamed “Mom at 16” and began to sugarcoat the challenges of raising a child as an impoverished teenager, instead emphasizing the “beauty of motherhood.”

Several regional governments have introduced one-time cash payments of \$1,000 to \$2,000 for pregnant university students. The payments are contingent on women carrying the pregnancy beyond 12 weeks, which is the legal limit for abortion in Russia.

Some lawmakers have proposed legislation to reduce that limit to nine weeks.

Even as Russian business leaders complain that inflation is choking investment and citizens gripe about the soaring cost of groceries, Putin insists that his country is stronger and better than ever, that Russia is shaping a new world order in defiance of the West and that he is winning in Ukraine.

In a keynote speech at the Valdai forum a few weeks ago, Putin spoke of this new world order as an established fact.

“He seems to believe that he has won the war,” said journalist

and author Mikhail Zygar, who, like many critics of the Kremlin, lives in exile. “His address carries the implication that, with the Democrats’ loss in the U.S. elections, the Western world he has fought against is defeated — and Putin is delivering his verdict.”

“He’s waiting for Trump,” Zygar added. “Trump is practically seen as the mascot for the end of the old world order and the demise of the liberal democratic ideology.”

Although Trump has pointed to Putin’s inability to prevent Assad’s ouster as evidence of Russia’s economic and military weakness, Putin has brushed aside the criticism and said he is ready to engage with the incoming president.

In recent days, Putin has also boasted about the Oreshnik, a new hypersonic missile that Russia fired at Ukraine in response to President Joe Biden’s decision to allow Ukraine to use longer-range U.S. weapons to strike into Russian territory.

The missile did not frighten the West as much as Putin had hoped, with Western experts doubting its capabilities and Russia’s ability to mass-produce it. Still, it has added a new dimension to Putin’s saber-rattling at home. Fishman, the TV Rain anchor, said Putin had reshaped Russia with three core concepts: “nuclear orthodoxy,” a traditionalist, patriarchal society glued together by the threat of the world’s annihilation; the “special military operation,” the Kremlin’s euphemism for the Ukraine war; and a disregard for human rights and life.

“What power does democracy hold if an Oreshnik missile can melt an underground bunker four stories deep?” Fishman asked.

Outside analysts also see Putin as riding high into 2025, despite the various setbacks.

“Putin has successfully convinced Washington that he is to be feared and that he is crazy enough to drag NATO into war,” analysts from the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington-based think tank, concluded in a recent report. “Allies have let their fear of escalation overtake a winning military strategy. As a result, Putin has put a finger to the wind and sees it is blowing in his direction.”



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PHOTOS BY MICHAEL S. WILLIAMSON/THE WASHINGTON POST

MEDAL FROM A1

having been taken from their grandfather, whose title, Ras, is the Ethiopian equivalent of prince or duke. Ras Desta's death was eventually deemed a war crime by the United Nations War Crimes Commission, said James De Lorenzi, a history professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York who has written about Ethiopia.

"It is seeped in blood," Laly Kassa said of the medal. "We would rather not get involved in things like this. We have children and jobs. But there was just no way we could be quiet."

No one purchased the medal when la Galerie Numismatique, a European company, held the auction Dec. 1, setting a minimum opening bid of 45,000 euros or about \$47,000. As a result, the ornament remains in the control of Philip Eagleton, a medal designer who is based in Istanbul and Spain and who, as it happens, has his own ties to Haile Selassie's family.

Eagleton, in emailed responses to inquiries from The Washington Post, questioned whether the medal ever belonged to Ras Desta despite what la Galerie Numismatique claimed on his behalf.

"Medals have no DNA," Eagleton wrote. "Provenance is likely shaky. Auction houses and dealers take their data without due diligence so its [sic] a wild-goose chase. The item has changed hands on numerous occasions and there is zero provable Provenance. A waste of everyone's time. It's rumour [sic] nothing more."

Asked to reconcile his explanation with the auctioneer's own claim that the medal once belonged to Ras Desta, Eagleton said it was la Galerie Numismatique — not he — that wrote the description. The company's director, Bogdan Stambuliu, did not respond to emails seeking comment.

Christopher Marinello, the Kassas' attorney who has extensive experience dealing with stolen art, cast doubt on Eagleton's explanation, saying that consigners, as a practice, sign off on an auctioneer's description of their item before it's listed.

"That's always the case," Marinello said. "He's obviously going back on his word."

Stambuliu, in an email to Marinello that he sent before the auction, wrote that the seller was "flattered in your interest for his medal" and offered to sell it to the family for 61,595 euros, or about \$64,000, including taxes and a buyer's fee.

Marinello replied that he would forward the proposal to the family, according to a copy of the exchange he shared with The Post. He also wrote that Stambuliu's inclusion of taxes and the fee in the price for "stolen property is insulting."

A traumatic history

Laly and Kokeb Kassa, along with their brother, Amaha, immigrated to the United States in

1977 as youngsters and eventually settled in the D.C. metropolitan area, which is home to the country's largest population of Ethiopians. Two more of their siblings followed them to America a decade later. The sisters now reside in Annandale, a Washington suburb, where they are neighbors and have raised their children. Laly, 61, works as a financial adviser while Kokeb, 57, is a fundraiser for an international humanitarian aid organization.

For all their grounding in suburban American life, the Kassas often encounter reminders of their family's complex and traumatic history 7,100 miles away in Ethiopia, a history that their sister, Yeshe Kassa, recounted in a 2023 documentary, "Grandpa was an Emperor."

A few days before learning of the auction, for example, the family attended a service commemorating the 50th anniversary of the day that revolutionaries executed 60 members of Haile Selassie's government. The dead included their uncle and other relatives. After Selassie was overthrown in 1974, their mother, Princess Seble, was imprisoned for 14 years along with other members of the Imperial family. Their father, Kassa Wolde-Mariam, also a high-ranking official in the government, was executed in 1979.

"It's schizophrenic," Kokeb

Kassa said of their family's life, which is simultaneously steeped in the present and a storied past. "It is living two lives — one in suburban Virginia, as others, trying to get their kids through school and the other life, juggling history, ensuring that the accurate history is taught."

Their discovery of their grandfather's medal catalyzed another jarring plunge into their family's past.

As Haile Selassie's son-in-law, Ras Desta was a prominent member of the Imperial family, dispatched on a goodwill mission in 1933 to New York, where he was greeted with a 21-gun salute, and D.C., where he visited George Washington's tomb at Mount Vernon. At a White House luncheon, Ras Desta presented President Franklin D. Roosevelt with gifts, including a framed photograph of Haile Selassie and two lion skins (a contemporaneous news report said he had killed the lions himself).

"The Ras presented a splendid figure," the New York Times reported at the time, describing him as "clad in the exotic splendor of Ethiopia" — attire that included a "white sun helmet," a "black cloaklike garment" with gold trimmings, "yellow suede gloves" and an "ivory-inlaid cane."

Two years later, when Italy invaded Ethiopia and Haile Selassie and his family fled to

Britain, it was Ras Desta who led the resistance along the country's southern border — that is, until the Italian soldiers, working with Ethiopians, captured and executed him.

His grandchildren said they were unaware of his medal until they learned of the auction. But they weren't surprised that an old family artifact had turned up. When Haile Selassie was deposed, the Imperial family's possessions — their real estate, furnishings, jewelry, art and other valuables — were seized by the revolutionary government of Mengistu Haile Mariam.

"They went to their houses and took everything from them," Laly Kassa said. "It was a wholesale confiscation."

At various points over the years, she and her siblings have heard about auctioneers selling other items related to their family. What made the medal distinct was the auctioneer's claim that it was taken from Ras Desta when he was captured.

That the medal has purportedly been auctioned multiple times over the years, as the auctioneer has claimed, does not make the most recent attempted sale any more acceptable to Ras Desta's grandchildren.

"This is looting of the highest order," said Amaha Kassa, 51, Laly's brother who lives in New York. "If I robbed your family heirloom and then I sell it to

someone and they sell it to someone, at no point on that chain does that mean you're entitled to it."

An uncertain future

After learning about the medal's impending auction, Laly Kassa contacted Marinello, the founder of the Art Recovery Group, an organization that has reclaimed over \$500 million in "stolen and looted artwork," including by the Nazis, according to its website.

Marinello immediately emailed the auctioneer, asking that they pull the medal from the sale because of its purported connection to Ras Desta and the circumstances under which it was lost. "You want a provenance that is, 'An artist created a painting,'" Marinello said by telephone from Europe. "You don't want murder, Nazism, bloodshed. And this was dripping in blood."

The auctioneer refused to cancel the sale and did not seem worried when Marinello warned that negative publicity could harm the medal's value.

"There is no bad publicity!:)))) in fact this free marketing is absolutely positive and will boost the auction!" the auctioneer replied, according to a copy of the email that Marinello shared with The Post.

Before the auction, and after, Ethiopian officials wrote to Stambuliu, imploring him to

# International dispute dredges up one family's traumatic past



**TOP:** Kokeb, left, and Laly Kassa are the granddaughters of Ras Desta Damtew, an Ethiopian noble said to have been in possession of the solid gold medal before his execution during the second Italo-Ethiopian war. **ABOVE:** Laly Kassa holds a photo of the boy who grew up to be Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie, the Kassas' great-grandfather. Selassie was deposed in 1974 and later killed.

turn the medal over to their country. Marinello also made contact with Eagleton, 64, the son of a former U.S. ambassador, who is affiliated with a company known as "Worth Istanbul." On its website, the company describes itself as a design firm that, among other things, creates "Orders and Medals for royal families and governments, worldwide."

Unbeknownst to the Kassa siblings, Eagleton had his own connection to a descendant of Haile Selassie. In the late 1990s, Eagleton and Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie, the emperor's grandson, were listed as officers in a charity known as the Haile Selassie Fund for Ethiopian Children In Need Inc., according to public records. Sahle-Selassie, who resides in the D.C. area, also has served as an adviser to a business that Eagleton was involved in, said Laura Peet, the prince's spokesperson.

Peet confirmed in an email that Sahle-Selassie and Eagleton "worked together" in the past but that they "are not in regular contact" and that "any communication in the last several years would have been purely social."

"Prince Ermias had no idea that Mr. Eagleton was in possession of the medal," Peet wrote, an assertion echoed by Eagleton, who described the royal family as "old friends."

Asked whether the prince thinks the medal belongs to Ethiopia, Peet wrote: "Prince Ermias believes that any artifact — if the provenance can be proven — should be returned to its country of origin."

Eagleton said in an email that he obtained the medal about five years ago as "part of a barter" involving "Arabian items from my collection." He said he was selling the medal to raise money for expenses he has incurred.

As to whether he would give the medal to Ethiopia, Eagleton wrote: "This is a mystery. Anyway nothing will happen before 2025."

A few days later, Eagleton contacted The Post again, writing that, after consulting with someone he described as an "expert," he would not "associate myself selling, gifting or conveying" the medal "to anyone, other than to where I obtained it."

"If everyone wants to pretend what it is now clearly not, that's their affair," Eagleton added, "but I will not be participating in the circus."

The Kassa siblings, in the meantime, say they do not believe they or Ethiopia should pay for Ras Desta's medal and that it should be permanently displayed at the National Museum of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa, the country's capital and largest city.

"It is important for everyone to know his role in Ethiopian history," Laly Kassa said. Referring to Eagleton, she said, "Hopefully, he will see the light and do the right thing. We would be happy to celebrate him as a hero for returning it."

Aaron Schaffer contributed to this report.



# ECONOMY & BUSINESS

## Making financial resolutions? Start with an honest assessment.



**Michelle Singletary**

THE COLOR OF MONEY

I've always enjoyed the annual ritual of making New Year's resolutions. If you're not a fan, try looking at the exercise as I do. Every year, you have another chance to change.

Perhaps you've heard a version of this quote often attributed to the inventor Thomas Edison: "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."

According to the biography "Edison: His Life and Inventions" by Frank Lewis Dyer and Thomas Commerford Martin, here's what he said after an associate commented about multiple attempts to create a new type of storage battery.

"Isn't it a shame that with the tremendous amount of work you have done, you haven't been able to get any results?" the associate said to Edison.

To which Edison reportedly replied: "Why, man, I have gotten a lot of results! I know several thousand things that won't work."

This money stuff is hard. If you didn't meet all your financial goals last year, you just found what didn't work.

As you begin listing what you want to change about your finances in 2025, here are four less-obvious resolutions that can impact your financial well-being.

### Resolve to face your financial truth

Let's return to Edison. Successful inventors learn from their mistakes. They look at what went wrong.

How can you become a better money manager if you don't look back?

Think hard. What's holding

you back from moving forward financially?

Perhaps your shop-till-you-drop spending has its roots in some childhood trauma or drama. Have you accumulated credit card debt trying to erase the memories of not having enough? Or maybe you lived a silver-spoon lifestyle as a child but can't sustain it now because you don't have the same resources as your parents?

Unpack the issues that may be keeping you from achieving financial freedom. This may mean seeking help from a therapist.

My years of experience directing a large financial literacy program have shown me that some people barely make it paycheck to paycheck despite living as frugally as possible. Theirs is not a matter of frivolous overspending; they don't make enough money to cover the necessities of life.

However, I've counseled many people who have mismanaged their money because they suffer from a sense of entitlement. They eat out — a lot. They feel entitled to a luxury vehicle with a monthly payment near or at \$1,000 a month. They take vacations at the expense of having a solid emergency fund. Shopping sprees are their preferred choice of entertainment.

Face the truth of your past, and you'll be more likely to find financial freedom.

### Resolve to mend broken relationships

A lot of financial problems aren't about the money. They stem from deep-seated issues that can tear apart families and friends.

I'm not suggesting you be nice to your siblings or relatives just so they can bail you out,



WASHINGTON POST ILLUSTRATION; ISTOCK

**Not all financial resolutions are about dollars and cents. Consider your past, your relationships and your health as well.**

especially if you're a poor money manager.

However, think about your support network or the lack thereof.

Some relationships might be too toxic to fix. However, with family counseling or individual therapy, you might be able to resolve the issues that keep you from having healthy relationships.

Here's something else to consider.

Who's going to take care of you should you need care in your senior years?

If you're estranged from your adult children or other relatives, who will help you if you need long-term care?

When I talk to seniors, many seem less afraid of dying than of living so long that they'll

eventually need help with basic activities, such as preparing meals, bathing and dressing.

According to Genworth Financial's most recent cost-of-care survey, the national annual median cost of a private room in a skilled-nursing home was \$116,800, while a semiprivate room went for \$104,000. The price of an assisted-living facility was \$64,200, and a home health aide was \$75,500.

Given such costs, most long-term-care services are provided through unpaid labor, namely family members and friends, according to the National Institute on Aging.

One frequent and frustrating complaint I often hear from caregivers is that they can't get their adult siblings to help care for a parent.

Why?

Unresolved hurt feelings. Unaddressed sibling rivalry. A legacy of family dysfunction.

Even if you have money to pay for your care, you'll need someone to help monitor the care you're getting and perhaps manage your finances.

### Resolve to focus on your financial health

My best friend has always said: "I don't know how you do it all."

I know how.

I didn't get enough sleep. I worked long into the night, snacking on unhealthy foods to keep my energy up.

Or I ran myself ragged, unable to say "No" to various demands on my time.

Poor health choices cost you money, either now or later in

retirement.

I learned to make changes. I set a bedtime. I'm more protective of my time with no excuses necessary.

I've adopted this mantra: "No is a complete sentence."

Sleep more. Eat better. Exercise. Your health can have a significant impact on your wealth.

### Resolve to be more generous to those less fortunate

If you can afford it, prioritize charitable giving in your budget. It may help you realize how much you have.

When you put more focus on helping others less fortunate, it tends to put your wants in perspective.

Gratefulness is life-changing and cost-effective.

# Citing election, U.S. imposes sanctions on Russian and Iranian groups

## Treasury says entities spread disinformation to divide Americans

BY JEFF STEIN

The Treasury Department announced new sanctions Tuesday on Iranian and Russian entities accused of trying to interfere with the U.S. 2024 elections, including by allegedly using artificial intelligence to disseminate false information.

In its statement, Treasury said it was imposing sanctions on both a subsidiary of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and an affiliate of Russia's military intelligence agency over their efforts to "stoke sociopolitical tensions and influence the U.S. electorate during the 2024 election." Treasury's statement also said the Russian entity used AI tools to "quick-

ly create disinformation that would be distributed across a massive network" of fake news websites and produced "baseless accusations" about a 2024 vice-presidential candidate, whom Treasury declined to identify.

Although the sanctions target relatively minor entities and are unlikely to have major economic effects, they reflect the deteriorating relationship between the United States and two of its chief geopolitical adversaries. President Joe Biden is weighing much more far-reaching sanctions against Russia's energy sector, while President-elect Donald Trump is expected to try to significantly increase economic pressure on Tehran.

"The Governments of Iran and Russia have targeted our election processes and institutions and sought to divide the American people through targeted disinformation campaigns," Bradley Smith, Treasury's acting undersecretary for terrorism and finan-



JOSE LUIS MAGANA/AP

**The Treasury Department said it issued the sanctions over efforts to "stoke sociopolitical tensions and influence the U.S. electorate."**

cial intelligence, said in a statement.

Sanctions were imposed on the Center for Geopolitical Expertise

(CGE), a Moscow-based group founded by Aleksandr Dugin, whom Treasury had already sanctioned in 2015. Treasury accused

the center of working closely with the Russian military intelligence service that "oversees sabotage, political interference operations and cyberwarfare" against the West.

In its statement, Treasury said the intelligence service both directed and provided financial support to the center to influence the 2024 presidential election. With that support, Treasury said, the center maintained a network of "at least 100 websites" for its "disinformation operations," through which it pushed false information.

"CGE and its personnel used generative AI tools to quickly create disinformation that would be distributed across a massive network of websites designed to imitate legitimate news outlets to create false corroboration between the stories, as well as to obfuscate their Russian origin," the Treasury statement said.

The Russian center also "manipulated a video" to "produce

baseless accusations concerning a 2024 vice-presidential candidate," Treasury said. Treasury did not identify the video, but The Washington Post and other news organizations reported in October that, according to U.S. intelligence officials, Moscow was behind a faked video and other material smearing Democratic vice-presidential nominee Tim Walz with abuse allegations. Separately, Microsoft researchers said this fall that Russian entities had circulated false videos on social media in which an actor accused Vice President Kamala Harris of a non-existent hit-and-run.

The sanctions also target the Cognitive Design Production Center, a subsidiary of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, over its "influence operations," according to the Treasury Department. The Justice Department previously charged three men with an alleged hack-and-leak attack against Trump's presidential campaign.

## DIGEST

### COMMODITIES

## Cocoa, coffee prices end 2024 on high note

Cocoa and coffee are poised to close 2024 as the biggest gainers among commodities for a second year on a global supply deficit, while steelmaking coal will end as the worst performer, hit by slow growth in China.

Looking ahead, global trade tensions are likely to dominate the commodities landscape in 2025 as Donald Trump returns to the White House threatening hefty tariffs, analysts said.

A strong dollar and gold's appeal as a safe haven for investors are likely to support precious metals prices, while ample supply could depress oil for a third year, they added.

In bad news for chocolate lovers, cocoa nearly tripled in price during 2024, far outpacing gains in other commodities. It hit a record high of \$12,931 a metric ton in New York earlier in December on forecasts of lower supply for a fourth successive season in West Africa following dry weather. Top cocoa producers Ivory Coast and Ghana have

suffered crop losses due to adverse weather, bean disease, smuggling and reduced plantations in favor of illegal gold mining. Dryness has strained coffee supplies as well. ICE Arabica coffee prices soared to their highest point in more than 40 years amid fears that severe drought in 2024 damaged the upcoming crop in top producer Brazil.

— Reuters

### COURTS

## Judge will not dismiss 'spring water' lawsuit

A federal judge in Connecticut refused to dismiss a long-running lawsuit accusing the former Nestle Waters North America of defrauding consumers by labeling its Poland Spring bottled water as "spring water."

While rejecting some claims in the proposed class action, U.S. District Judge Jeffrey Alker Meyer in New Haven called it an open question whether Poland Spring qualified as spring water under the laws of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York,

Pennsylvania and Rhode Island.

Poland Spring is now owned by Tampa, Florida-based Primo Brands, following multiple corporate transactions.

Consumers sued Nestle Waters, then owned by Nestle, in 2017, saying it deceived them into overpaying for Poland Spring with labels declaring it to be "Natural Spring Water" or "100% Natural Spring Water."

The plaintiffs said "not one drop" of the 1 billion gallons sold yearly in the United States came from a natural spring, and that the actual Poland Spring in Maine "ran dry" two decades before Nestle bought the brand in 1992.

In seeking a dismissal, Nestle Waters said geologists and officials in the eight states agreed that Poland Spring complied with a U.S. Food and Drug Administration rule defining spring water, and each state authorized its sale as "spring water."

But the judge cited a former Syracuse University earth sciences professor hired by the plaintiffs, who said Nestle Waters appeared to use man-made springs and extracted pond water and other surface water instead of

"true" spring water.

Meyer agreed with Nestle Waters that the plaintiffs lacked standing to demand new labels, because they now knew the alleged "truth" about Poland Spring and could buy other brands of water.

— Reuters

### WIND ENERGY

## New Jersey offshore project seeks delay

A New Jersey offshore wind project is seeking a second delay, saying it still can't find someone to build crucial equipment for the turbines in the latest patch of turbulence striking the industry.

Leading Light Wind had already received one pause on its project from the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, which acknowledged the difficulty the project has had in finding a manufacturer for the blades that would spin to generate electricity.

But that pause ended on Dec. 20. The day before, Leading Light asked the board for an additional stay, this time through May 20. It did not specify an inability to find a blade manufacturer as the

reason for needing a second delay, but its most recent request said, "The offshore wind equipment market continues to experience significant price volatility and the company has not yet identified a solution to that volatility."

The company did not respond to inquiries Monday and Tuesday about whether a blade manufacturer is at the heart of the second request.

— Associated Press

### ALSO IN BUSINESS

**U.S. demand from liquefied natural gas plants hit a record on Tuesday, the last day of the year, climbing to 15.2 billion cubic feet in a sign of a strong year ahead from the start-up of two new gas-processing plants, preliminary data from financial firm LSEG showed. U.S. natural gas demand for LNG plants is forecast to rise to 17.8 billion cubic feet per day in 2025 with the commissioning of Venture Global LNG's 20 million tons per annum Plaquemines plant in Louisiana and Cheniere Energy's Corpus Christi Stage 3 expansion in Texas. Demand for natural gas by LNG export plants could spur higher production in**

the United States and increase prices at the country's main gas exchange in Louisiana, called Henry Hub.

**The United Kingdom's Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency said on Tuesday it had approved Merck's therapy to treat a rare lung condition, marking another win for the drugmaker's potential blockbuster. The therapy, sotatercept, received U.S. approval in March 2024 and is also approved in the European Union and 30 other markets. The agency's approval is based on data from a study of 323 patients with pulmonary arterial hypertension, in which Merck's therapy was more effective in improving patients' ability to exercise, compared to placebo. The U.S. drugmaker acquired sotatercept as part of its \$11.5 billion acquisition of Acceleron Pharma in 2021. It has been expanding its cardiovascular drugs portfolio as it prepares for a potential hit to sales after key patents for its top-selling cancer therapy Keytruda expire later this decade.**

— From news services



# Big Tech, Trump, the Fed drive stock rallies

STOCKS FROM A1

global market strategist at Wells Fargo Investment Institute.

But in a way, those fears came at a good time, Bespoke Investment co-founder Paul Hickey said, because it helped push the Fed to ease monetary policy. “It almost panicked the Fed into cutting 50 basis points at its annual meeting” in September, Hickey said.

Markets rallied further late in the year, fueled by what analysts say was exuberance over the election of Donald Trump to a second presidential term. The president-elect punctuated the “Trump trade” when he rang the bell at the New York Stock Exchange in December, though stocks fell days later on signals that the Fed, rather than cutting interest rates further, planned to leave them at their current level for longer than many observers had expected.

Here are the highlights of a momentous year in stocks.

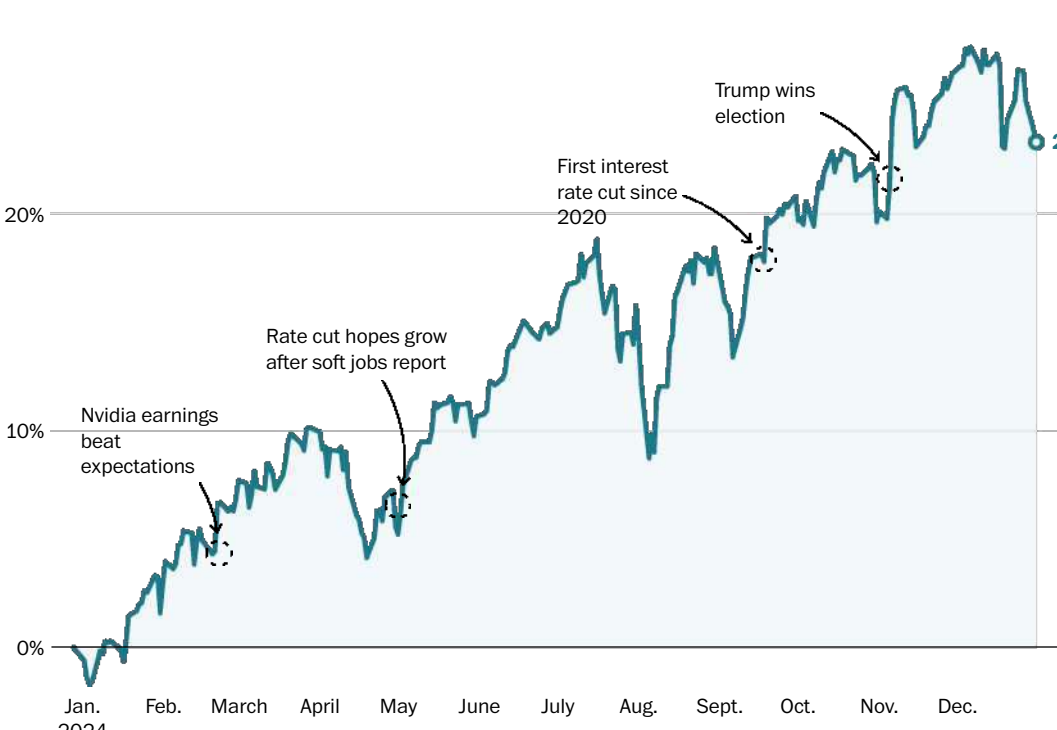
## The ‘Magnificent Seven’ soar

The S&P 500’s record gains in the first half of 2024 were driven by seven tech stocks that significantly outperformed the other companies on the index. The “Magnificent Seven” — Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, Meta, Microsoft, Nvidia and Tesla — have an outsized effect on the S&P 500 because the index is weighted by market capitalization, a shorthand for companies’ size and value.

The rest of the index started to catch up in the latter half of the year, a rally that showed “it’s not just seven companies driving the entire economy,” Hickey said.

But the technology and AI sectors continued to dominate investors’ attention. And no stock captured their enthusiasm like AI chipmaker Nvidia, whose earnings calls have inspired rapturous takes from traders and casual investors alike.

## Percent change of S&P 500 since Dec. 31, 2023



“Every bull market has a theme, and the theme of this bull market has been AI,” Hickey said.

Chris Rupkey, with FwdBonds, said Nvidia’s juggernaut status has made it something of a bellwether for the broader market.

“Follow the bouncing ball of Nvidia,” he said in August. “Nvidia down, sell everything. Nvidia up, buy it all.”

Nvidia’s growth has slowed in recent months, and its stock has taken temporary hits after strong earnings reports, as analysts set exceedingly hard-to-meet expectations and some raise concerns that rampant spending on AI is creating a financial bubble.

But some analysts say Nvidia will have staying power and catalyze further investment in AI.

“This is the fourth industrial revolution playing out across tech,” said Dan Ives, global head of technology research at Wedbush Securities. “It’s led by Mag 7, but now software and cybersecurity players are getting in.”

## Interest rate relief

U.S. stocks dipped, then surged, after the Fed cut interest rates by a half-percentage point in September, easing monetary policy for the

first time since March 2020 amid signs that inflation was moderating.

That, in turn, boosted consumer sentiment and took the edge off interest rates.

“A funny thing kind of happened on the way to the recession and/or economic slowdown that we all anticipated, which is basically that the [middle- and high-income] consumer just never flinched,” Samana said.

## The Trump effect

U.S. stocks jumped on the news that Trump would return to the White House after campaigning on promises to slash regulations. Companies expected to benefit under the Trump administration — such as the private prison company Geo Group and Tesla, which is led by Trump adviser Elon Musk — leaped, while renewable energy and pharmaceutical stocks sank in the immediate aftermath.

But Hickey said the conventional wisdom about winners and losers in the market doesn’t always pan out when it comes to politics.

“Coming into the first Trump administration, you would have thought the energy sector would have done well,” he said. “It was

the worst-performing sector.”

Looking ahead, Hickey expects the industrial sector will perform well in 2025, especially if loosened regulations help lingering construction projects break ground — such as renewable-energy proposals green-lit by the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.

The biggest wild card going into 2025 is tariffs, said David Sekera, chief U.S. market strategist at Morningstar. Trump has said he intends to impose a blanket tariff on imports, but it’s unclear what would be covered and how much of the promise is campaign rhetoric.

## Bitcoin booms

Bitcoin had a massive year — and that was especially reflected in the share price of MicroStrategy, a business software company that has snapped up several billions of dollars in bitcoin. The company’s stock is up more than 320 percent year to date, with much of those gains coming after the presidential election.

Bitcoin itself began the year with a massive boost, as the Securities and Exchange Commission approved exchange-traded funds tied to the price of bitcoin. In the following months, bitcoin’s price nearly doubled, from around \$40,000 per coin in January to about \$73,000 per coin in March. The price largely held steady until Trump was elected to a second term. After the November election, bitcoin’s price soared and at one point surpassed \$100,000 per coin, a milestone cheered by the cryptocurrency community. The first and most valuable cryptocurrency was up more than 110 percent for 2024.

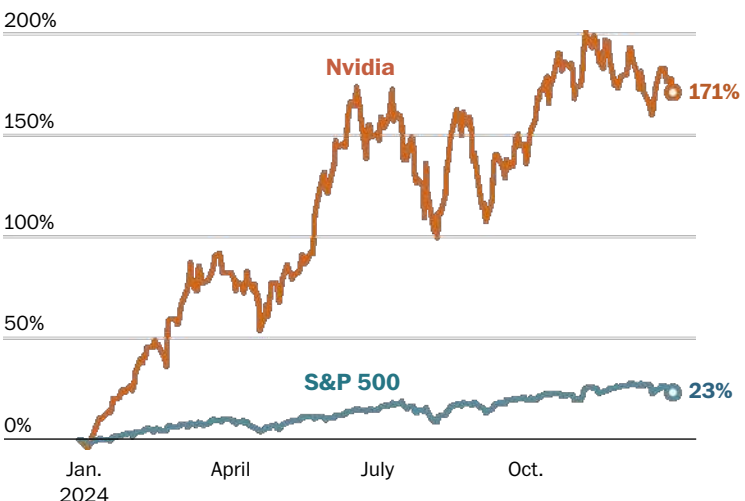
## Noteworthy stocks

While Magnificent Seven stocks received big publicity in 2024, a few lesser-known companies dwarfed their gains — at least when it came to growth. Sezzle, a “buy now, pay later” company, was up more than 1,000 percent on the year, with much of its gains coming after the November election.

Shares in NuScale Power, a nuclear power company focused on small modular reactors, was up more than 470 percent on the year. The rise reflects investor ex-

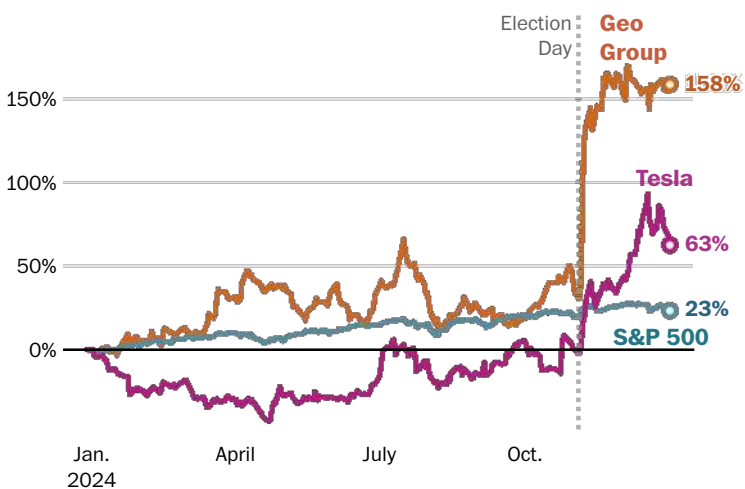
## The ‘Magnificent Seven’ soar

Percent change since Dec. 31, 2023



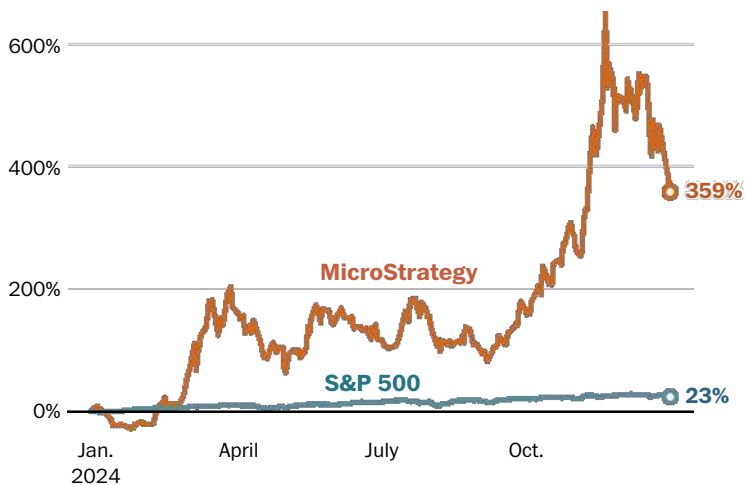
## The Trump effect

Percent change since Dec. 31, 2023



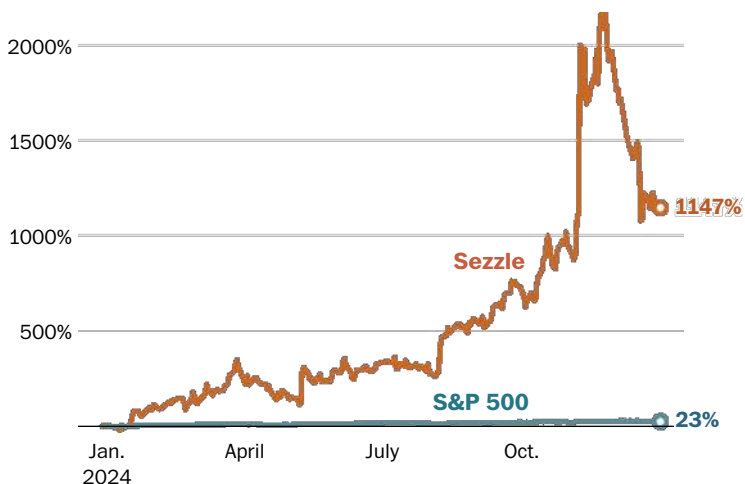
## Bitcoin booms

Percent change since Dec. 31, 2023



## Noteworthy stocks

Percent change since Dec. 31, 2023



Source: Yahoo Finance

citement over the transition to low-carbon energy sources.

AppLovin, a mobile app development and marketing company, also had a banner year on Wall

Street, with the companies’ shares up more than 730 percent on the year. Analysts say the company has been able to wield AI to more effectively market apps.



SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

Traders work on the New York Stock Exchange floor Tuesday, closing out a year that saw major gains.

## A BETTER BATH REMODEL

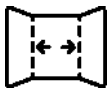
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WEDNESDAY OPINION

On New Year’s Day, the U.S. Navy rules the rhymes

BY SAM J. TANGREDI

The official log of a U.S. Navy warship is written according to a strictly regulated formula. On a standardized form, the watch stander records the details: combat actions, course, speed, sea conditions, strain on the mooring lines. The officer of the deck signs the log at the end of the four-hour watch. Each entry is a legal document, historical record and solemn testimony. Once a year, however, it can also be poetry.

Ordinarily, the entries are rendered in stilted official prose, such as “Assumed the watch, moored as before” and “Damage Control Central reports all secure.” The observations for the first watch of the new day — 0000 to 0400 (12 a.m. to 4 a.m.) — are the most extensive, noting all the initial conditions. Later

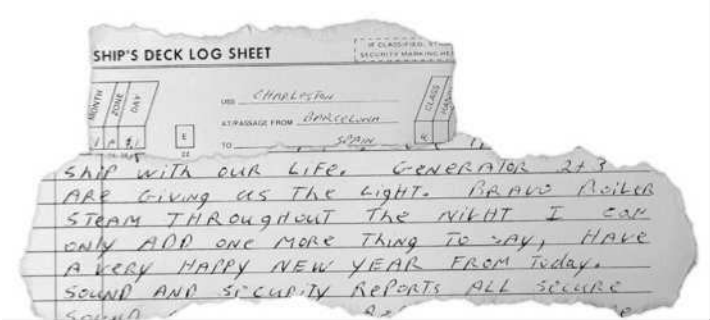
entries take the “moored as before” approach. Normally, it’s about as creative as the paperwork for a car loan (unless the enemy is shooting).

With one exception: It has become an American tradition to write the first entry of a new year as a poem, or at least in rhyme. No other navy does this. Such verses began appearing in ships’ logs in the late 1920s, reached a peak during World War II and have continued since. Not every skipper accepts the practice, but it is generally tolerated, and often celebrated. (I collaborated on such a poem when I was an officer of the deck early in my naval career.) In the 1960s, when the Navy was considerably larger, the Navy Times newspaper held New Year’s deck log poetry contests, receiving hundreds of entries. These days, only a small number of ships carry on the practice — as might be expected in an era of texting and emojis.

No one pretends that the poems are works of art. It’s difficult to rhyme terms such as “starboard” and “fire-control radar.” The dash of humor the entries provide, however, makes the tradition worth preserving. In 2020, the Naval History and Heritage Command resurrected the yearly contest, granting a modicum of fame to the most creative (or perhaps the most lonely and bored) New Year’s watch standers.

Here are three poems from the start of 1975 — 50 years ago — aboard the USS Coral Sea, docked in the Philippines; the USS Constellation in California; and the USS Charleston in Barcelona.

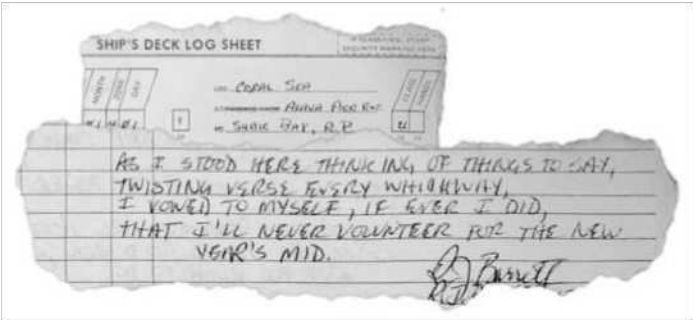
Sam J. Tangredi is a retired Navy captain and Leidos chair of future warfare studies at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. Ship’s logs are sourced from the National Archives.



USS Charleston

By J.W. Odijk,  
commissaryman chief petty officer

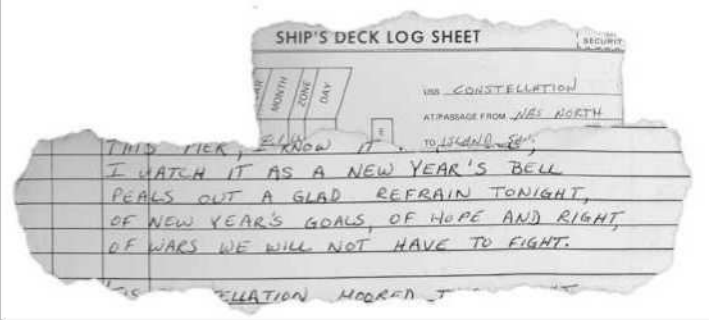
Assumed the first watch of the year  
Med-moored to a civilian pier  
It’s windy, and the lines are doubled  
Aft where we stand our watch out of the draft.  
Both anchors are laying on the bottom port with 90;  
Starboard with 160 fathom.  
Muelle del Contradique is the name of our pier in  
Barcelona, Spain;  
First time we’re here.  
We are not the only U.S. Navy ship,  
There are several more farther down the slip.  
To the Sixth Fleet we all belong  
With Capt Miller as SOPA aboard the Guam.  
Several merchants are tied up around our pier  
They ply the oceans far and near.  
With our condition of readiness set at 5  
We trust in the ship with our life.  
Generator 2 + 3 are giving us the light.  
Bravo boiler steam throughout the night  
I can only add one more thing to say,  
Have a very happy new year from today.



USS Coral Sea

By R.J. Barrett,  
lieutenant junior grade, U.S. Navy Reserve

Assumed the watch.  
Nineteen seventy five, the very first day  
Finds Coral Sea in Subic Bay.  
Section Four is the “lucky one”  
To stay aboard and miss the fun.  
Our shipmates all have gone ashore,  
At twelve o’clock we heard the roar.  
So far away and yet so near;  
Moored starboard side to Alava Pier.  
Lines 1 and 9 are strung out tight  
The head and stern wires are set just right.  
The standard moor doubled is what you’ll see,  
As you walk along checking good ’ole 43.  
The commander of 7th Fleet’s carrier striking force  
Is embarked aboard, he’s SOPA, of course.  
CTF 77 is one in the same;  
RADM D.C. Davis is the gentleman’s name.  
Down in the hole the snipes are doing fine,  
Only IC boiler is in on the line.  
Five fire pumps are lit off and ready  
D.C. reports secure; water pressure steady.  
Shore cables fore and aft from the pier do reach  
Giving us the link up for power from the beach.  
Miscellaneous services are hooked up too  
Most of the plant’s cold iron, so there’s not too much to do.  
In the harbor with us there’s quite a crowd  
A fleet to make any commodore proud  
The DESRONs and amphibs are represented well.  
Some of their names I’ll try to tell.  
Rathburne, Reasoner, Whipple, and Cook  
Are all settled in and have grabbed a nook  
Knox and Stoddert are nestled in too,  
But that’s not all; these are just a few.  
Also in sight from the Coral Sea  
Are Dubuque, Vancouver, and the Tripoli.  
Peoria and Thomaston are also around  
Some pretty fine vessels pound for pound.  
Taking one last look around the bay,  
There’s the Camden, Haleakala, and San Jose.  
Long Beach and Enterprise, make a special mark  
Who could miss their shape, even in the dark?  
The Gurnard, Reclaimer, and the Grayback  
Are all included, though good rhymes they lack.  
And because soon I’ll be retiring aft.  
I’ll just say “and various other yard and district craft.”  
With all this done, though before the watch’s conclusion  
I must record my New Year’s resolution.  
If any lesson over the past year has been learned,  
This single one, into my mind has been burned.  
As I stood here thinking of things to say,  
Twisting verse in every which way,  
I vowed to myself, if ever I did,  
That I’ll never volunteer for the New Year’s mid.



USS Constellation

By R.D. Sagendorf,  
lieutenant junior grade, U.S. Navy

This pier, I know it very well;  
I watch it as a New Year’s bell  
Peals out a glad refrain tonight,  
Of New Year’s goals, of hope and right,  
Of wars we will not have to fight.  
’Tis Constellation moored this night,  
With standard lines doubled, we sit just right.  
Our starboard side is to the pier,  
Berths Mike and November, we’re tied right here,  
To welcome in the bright new year.  
At North Island N.A.S. we sit,  
San Diego, Cal., looks fit,  
And ready for another year,  
For sailors, fun, and much good cheer,  
And duty days, you have no fear.  
The Kitty Hawk (CV-63) is forward, near,  
The Navasota (AO-106) is also here.  
The Chicago (CLG-11), with her missiles, too,  
And other ships of varied hue,  
Of the U.S. Third Fleet rest in view.  
The ship lies quiet, in cold iron state;  
With ComPhibPac — SOPA on this late date.  
Material condition yoke is set,  
And from the pier we often get,  
Various services — well met.  
While anchor lights fore and aft shine bright,  
And aircraft warning lights lend sight,  
This old year rushes, fleeting past,  
The new year hastens in, quite fast,  
And this line here will be my last.



OPINION

The Washington Post

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

Our resolution for 2025

THE YEAR 2000 opened with Russian President Boris Yeltsin stepping down before his term ended. A Post editorial on Jan. 1, 2000, wondered whether his successor, Vladimir Putin, would manipulate the media and government agencies to his advantage — “or will he seek to extend the brighter strands of Mr. Yeltsin’s legacy and find strength in true democracy and rule of law?”

Twenty-five years later, much has changed. The relative peace and prosperity of the 1990s turned out to be a short-lived break from history, not the end of it. The new millennium brought the Sept. 11 attacks, misadventures in Iraq, the 2008-2009 Great Recession and the covid-19 pandemic. Few anticipated the extent to which Mr. Putin would plunge his country into totalitarianism as he sought to rebuild the Soviet empire, including with a full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

The forward march of globalization and democracy that seemed inevitable a quarter-century ago now appears anything but. Rather than integrating with the rules-based international system, China is challenging that order — and, increasingly, the United States appears willing to undermine the global institutions it helped build. Assumptions that liberal democratic capitalism creates inexorable progress have been supplanted by a

new movement that advocates “degrowth” and reflects a pervasive dread that things can only get worse.

A new year offers occasion for reflection on the past and resolutions for the future. It’s striking how few analysts foresaw the most consequential events that followed the dawn of the new century. As 2015 began, no one anticipated that Donald Trump would, within months, come to dominate and redefine American politics for a generation. Halfway through the 2020s, what aren’t we anticipating?

Humans don’t like unpredictability and crave certitude, even though most forecasts tend to be wrong. But reality can surprise on the upside as well as the down. If, in 2000, many were too rosy in their predictions, in 2025 many might be too dire. So, our New Year’s resolution for 2025 is to embrace uncertainty. In a pessimistic age, society should welcome the unknown, because the future might be better than the past.

Wisdom requires humility. Just a few weeks ago, we drafted an editorial previewing the upcoming battle for Damascus. Before we could publish the piece, the regime of former president Bashar al-Assad fell. That’s the nature of daily journalism, but we’re taking it as a reminder to expect the unexpected and allow for the widest range of possible outcomes. That’s the nature of journalism,

too — or should be.

Also important is admitting mistakes and learning from them. The Editorial Board was wrong to assume that Russia sabotaged the Nord Stream natural gas pipeline. It turns out, as The Post has reported, that the likeliest scenario is that

*The forward march of globalization and democracy that seemed inevitable a quarter-century ago now appears far from it. Yet in a pessimistic age, we should welcome the unknown.*

Ukrainians, hoping to lessen European dependence on Russian gas, were behind the attack. That doesn’t mean Washington should cut off Kyiv, but it’s important to call out allies as well as adversaries when they err.

The United States is entering a stretch that we assume will be chaotic and tumultuous, but we must allow for the possibility that the next phase of history will surprise in that respect, too. That

doesn’t require ignoring reality, such as the crushing national debt, climate change or President-elect Donald Trump’s record. Still less does it call for discounting the lessons of history, such as the dangers of isolationism and protectionism. What it does demand is acknowledging that not every plausible negative outcome will be borne out.

There’s a fascinating interplay between alarmism and complacency, between catastrophizing about the future and idealizing the past. A little fear is necessary to spur action; too much becomes paralyzing. Millions of Americans have stopped following the news, many because they’re certain it will be bad. They’re missing out. It’s easy to lose sight of the reality that there has never been a better time to be alive. The poorest Americans have access to better medical care than the richest royals did a century ago. The country has been far more divided than it is now, yet it endured.

How different will the world look on Jan. 1, 2050? Or 2075? Or 2100? A new guard of leaders will emerge at home. But Russia will also almost certainly be without Mr. Putin, now 72. Will what follows be better for the Russian people and for global stability? We hope so, but no one can say for sure. Rather than assume the worst, let’s resolve to do everything we can to help engineer the best possible outcome for the world.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Your hopes for 2025

*The letters team asked readers to share their New Year’s resolutions, both for themselves and for The Post. Here are some of your aspirations. In Saturday’s Free for All, we’ll publish your ambitions for The Post in 2025.*

Read physical books

My No. 1 resolution is to walk to my public library (only one block away!) weekly and check out physical books rather than purchasing downloads for my e-reader. This facilitates my other two resolutions: moving more (walking to and from the library is a start) and ending my habit of doomscrolling/watching/reading the news constantly. After all, reading actual books (I love the smell of dust and paper) and exercising are two great ways to combat the creeping depression facilitated by the doom dive into what the next four years might bring.

**April Phillips, Norfolk**

Care less

Resolved: to stop belittling myself and my abilities in public in a misguided middle-school attempt to make others feel better about themselves, and to lower expectations to the point that no one expects anything from me.

**Lowell Brown, Staunton, Virginia**

In 2025, I am going to let more people’s opinions and thoughts about my actions and my loved ones’ actions roll off me like water off a duck. I just turned 50, and the first part of my life (in the words of my amazing therapist) shaped me into a perfectionist people-pleaser. I’ve spent time working on the perfectionist part over the past two decades, and I am resolved to “let it go” like Elsa, though without any singing or ice magic. I will ask my family, friends and therapist to hold me accountable for taking constructive criticism and growing without any shame spirals. It’s probably going to take more than one year to unlearn and undo 50 years of thoughts and behaviors; I suspect it will be uncomfortable and make me wildly happy.

**Beth Canfield-Simbro, Alliance, Ohio**

Do less

In 2012, I co-created an arts-based community development nonprofit in Newark that I still run. I’m 76, and I want to stop thinking that I alone can do everything, when I know I have recruited capable, talented and dedicated people who can do many things better than I can. And I might want to be kinder to official stakeholders in the city who control so much of the money and space in the local arts community.

**Timothy Dingman, Newark**

Go local

In 2025, I plan to do more for the public schools in my town, which are much more than schools. Because this is a Title I district, they serve two free meals every school day, provide counseling and basic health checkups, and collect school supplies and hygiene items for needy students.

**Heidi Bringham, Walla Walla, Washington**

To become more involved in my county government by attending meetings and getting on the docket when I have an issue to address. This time, I’ll put these events on my phone calendar to alert me to do so.

**Jan Feeler, Viroqua, Wisconsin**

Emulate my parents

My wife and I have a young daughter. We call her our early Christmas gift for 2024. I was very lucky with my own parents, Robert and Barbara Gallant.

MICHAEL RAMIREZ

Broken resolutions



They thought intentionally about how to make our community better and how to make things better for my sister and me. A few years ago, I needed some upgrades to my house, and I hired a crusty old contractor — he was like Bill Belichick in coveralls. He met my parents on the job site and had a lot of time to talk with them as he supervised the work, and they kind of supervised him. When the upgrades were finished, he pulled me aside and said, “You got really lucky with your parents.” And I said, “Yeah, I know.”

My resolution for this year and the coming years is to try to be as good a parent as my parents were to me. I hope a crusty old contractor will make a similar comment about me in a few decades.

**Stuart Gallant, Belmont, Massachusetts**

Tell inspiring stories

My goal this year is to profile the amazing senior citizens who reside with me at Knollwood retirement community in D.C., which was established 62 years ago by Mamie Eisenhower to house military widows. A decade ago, men were admitted as well. I am astounded by the careers these elders had with the CIA and the FBI; on Capitol Hill; on Wall Street; and in the Foreign Service, the military, medical professions, private industry and the nonprofit sector. Case in point: Our CEO’s wife was a helicopter pilot during the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and has become a

personal role model for me, as she juggled a stellar military career, supporting a husband who is a general and raising two successful sons.

Why do I care so much? Because their stories will break the myth of seniors who feel lonely, forgotten, unseen, unrecognized and unfulfilled. I feel so proud that I live and work with such outstanding people, and I want the world to know of them.

**Kathy Megyeri, Washington**

Look for context

To give and seek context in all things. This has been a lifelong journey and one I continue to encourage all to engage in, including everyone at The Post. For without context, we have no foundation within which to orient ourselves, make sound decisions, and arrive at fair judgment of ourselves and the situations we find ourselves in, both personally and collectively.

**Patricia Ormond, San Antonio**

Invest in friendships

I am going to reach out to old friends to reconnect, at least one per month. And I am going to include in this an effort to connect with several people on the opposite side from me politically so I can try to focus on common ground and hear what they have to say.

**Tom Martella, Washington**

Cultivate niceness

Resolutions are typically very easy to decide upon and initiate but very difficult to maintain. The reason for this is that they usually require the person to step out of their established daily routine, lifestyle or comfort zone, and to eliminate a vice, whether real or perceived.

Having said that, I think a good resolution for me would be to more mindful, considerate and compassionate toward others. Although I consider myself kind (i.e., I would go out of my way to save a person from imminent peril), I do not see myself as *nice*. In this hypothetical, the moment after I saved someone’s life, I would harshly berate them for getting themselves in such a predicament in the first place.

The only way I imagine I can hold myself accountable is to come up with a trigger word that will come to mind every time I see someone doing something immature, stupid or destructive. When I hear that word in my head, it will remind me to take a deep breath, take a step back and hold my tongue for at least 10 seconds.

In most cases, I will not even react to a situation where I would probably have reacted by saying something crass and unnecessarily made a bad situation worse. For me, that’s the best place to start.

**Arthur Saginian, Santa Clarita, California**

Don’t resolve. Try this.

After surviving a horrific year in 1993, I started a tradition of making a list of my accomplishments for the year just past instead of setting New Year’s resolutions. I limit it to 10 items. Rather than setting goals, which we all fail to truly follow through with, leading to self-recrimination and despair, I see what wonderful things I accomplished. My end-of-year self-evaluation was and is a positive experience, not a recriminatory exercise.

In 1993, making that list allowed me to feel joy, hopefulness and gratitude that — in spite of a nervous breakdown that led to my dropping out of college, losing all income and nearly becoming homeless — I had, in fact, experienced the most prolifically creative year of my life and had come out of it far stronger than before.

The following year, I went on tour, gave public speeches, wrote a book that I self-published in 1995, and, overcoming the horrors of my 1993 little hell, emerged respecting myself and useful to others.

It is 2025, and though the events of 1993 also led me to being classified as totally and permanently disabled, I’ve not only survived but thrived, too, and brought beautiful original music and ideas to many. These yearly “accomplishments lists” keep me motivated and hopeful.

**Clarisse Dodge, York, Pennsylvania**

When I was younger, I resolved that I wouldn’t wait until New Year’s Day to make any improvements to my life and myself. So I do not make any New Year’s resolutions.

**Philip Yabut, Washington**

Instead of resolutions, I use “nudge words,” which I learned about by reading The Post. They’ve helped me create a thread connecting goals I set for myself.

I’ve even persuaded my partner, and my siblings and their spouses, to participate with their own nudge words. I hold myself accountable by thinking and talking about my objectives.

**Sandra Steege, San Jose**

Letter submissions

Letters can be sent to **letters@washpost.com**. Submissions must be exclusive to The Post and should include the writer’s address and day and evening telephone numbers. Letters are subject to editing and abridgment. Please do not send letters as attachments. Because of the volume of material we receive, we are unable to acknowledge submissions; writers whose letters are under consideration for publication will be contacted.



OPINION

COLBERT I. KING

Carter’s true respect for D.C.

Jimmy Carter’s affinity for the District of Columbia was put on display soon after he took the presidential oath in 1977, and it remained apparent until he left office four years later. But his unflagging desire for Washingtonians to be honored and respected, and his record of service to the city, went largely unnoticed until the Good Lord called him home this week at the age of 100.

Much is made of Carter getting out of his limousine and walking part of the inaugural parade route to the White House, hand in hand with his wife, Rosalynn. That act pales in significance to the moment when she, four days later, walked hand in hand with their daughter, Amy, as she enrolled in the fourth grade at Thaddeus Stevens School, a predominantly Black public school on 21st Street NW between K and L streets. A president’s child had gone to a D.C. public school only once before — some 70 years earlier, when President Theodore Roosevelt’s youngest son, Quentin, attended the racially segregated, and now demolished, Force Elementary School on Massachusetts Avenue NW.

Carter was doing more than sending his child to Stevens, whose attendance zone included the White House. He was making a point.

Located in the city’s West End neighborhood, Thaddeus Stevens School happens to be the place the entire King family — mother Amelia, father Isaiah, sister Lucretia, brother Cranston and I — attended as kids. Amy Carter was entering a school erected in 1868 as the first in the city for children of formerly enslaved Black people.

Months earlier, in his nomination acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention in New York in 1976, Jimmy Carter said: “We can have an America that provides excellence in education for my child and your child and every child. We *can* have an America that encourages and takes pride in our ethnic diversity, our religious diversity, our cultural diversity, knowing that out of our pluralistic heritage has come the strength and vitality and creativity that has made us great and will keep us great.”

The Carters had choices. The president of the United States entrusted his daughter to our desegregated public schools. And the Carters showed up for school meetings and programs the same as other parents. After two years, Amy moved on to Rose Hardy Middle School, also in the D.C. public school system. They never turned their backs on us.

That testament to Carter’s regard for the District gets lost when talk turns to his time in Washington. But it is instructive as to who he was, what he believed and the firmness of his commitment to racial integration. This was a commitment that also found life in his presidency. As his White House domestic policy adviser, Stuart E. Eizenstat, wrote in a Post op-ed, Carter was the “first president from the Deep South since Reconstruction [who] championed civil rights and appointed more women, Black Americans and Jews to senior administration positions and judgeships than all 38 of his predecessors combined.”

Carter’s fidelity to the District, and his human decency, went beyond school attendance or even giving lip service to home rule, which was mandatory presidential behavior after President Richard M. Nixon signed the Home Rule Act into law in 1973.

Carter went much further. Upon signing a D.C. appropriations bill into law in 1979, he said, “I wish to reaffirm my commitment to the basic principles of fairness and self-determination, which must be the cornerstone of Federal-District relations.” He decried the fact that D.C. residents paid more than \$1 billion in federal taxes at the time, and that D.C.’s per capita tax payment was well above the national average. He deplored the reality that District residents had fought and died in every war since the Revolution, and that every other country in the free world provided full voting representation to the citizens of its capital city except the United States.

Hitting that point hard, Carter elevated D.C. self-determination to its historical zenith by throwing his weight behind a resolution for a constitutional amendment to give D.C. residents full voting representation in Congress.

Adoption of the resolution, Carter said, was “a major human rights priority for my administration.”

Carter’s legislative agenda proceeded in fits and starts on Capitol Hill — as well I know, having served as a deputy assistant secretary for legislative affairs in the Treasury Department from 1977 to 1979. However, with Carter’s unequivocal, full-throated endorsement, the proposed constitutional amendment was adopted by both houses of Congress and sent to the states for ratification.

The 50 states had seven years to consider the amendment, and 38 were needed for it to join the Constitution. When the time limit expired in 1985, only 16 states had ratified. Carter was long gone from Washington by then.

I had the privilege of receiving charter membership in the Senior Executive Service created by Carter. And I was honored by his appointment, with Senate confirmation, to serve as U.S. director of the World Bank. But for this native Washingtonian, nothing in Carter’s legacy stands in as sharp relief as his high regard and respect for this city.

That, indeed, is the yardstick against which to measure the District’s relationship with the Republican trifecta that will assume control of the federal establishment in January.



Amy Carter, daughter of President Jimmy Carter, on her first day of classes at Thaddeus Stevens Elementary School in D.C. on Jan. 24, 1977.

CATHERINE RAMPPELL

The Ozempic effect: How GLP-1s will disrupt the economy in 2025

A new technology is disrupting the economy. Even experts don’t entirely understand how it works, its full range of uses and what its unintended consequences could be.

No, it’s not artificial intelligence; I’m talking about weight-loss drugs. With adult obesity rates falling last year for the first time in more than a decade, drugs such as Ozempic and Zepbound are already reshaping Americans’ waistlines. Now, they’re poised to reshape the entire economy, too.

As of May, roughly 1 in 8 American adults had tried GLP-1 receptor agonists (GLP-1s for short). This percentage has almost certainly grown since then, as telehealth companies, “medi-spas” and compounding pharmacies have aggressively marketed GLP-1 prescriptions.

We’re only just beginning to learn the full universe of effects for this class of drugs. Originally developed to treat Type 2 diabetes, GLP-1s were soon discovered to be effective in treating obesity and managing weight loss. Now there’s an ever-growing list of other potential uses (on- and off-label), including for treating heart disease, sleep apnea, Alzheimer’s, substance abuse and maybe even gambling addiction.

“I’m on Wegovy for the rest of my life, but I can show you an entire medicine cabinet full of medications that I no longer have to take,” said Taryn Mitchell, 53, a GLP-1 patient in Greensboro, North Carolina.

So here are seven reasons these blockbuster drugs will disrupt the U.S. economy in 2025 — and beyond.

Spending on GLP-1s is skyrocketing.

Most insurance plans don’t (yet) cover GLP-1s for weight loss, and the list price for the brand names can run upward of \$1,000 a month. But that hasn’t scared everyone off: Pharmacies are having trouble keeping the meds in stock, and semaglutide (the active ingredient in Ozempic and Wegovy) was the top-selling drug in 2023.

Perhaps this is unsurprising given that more than 40 percent of Americans are clinically obese. The United States spent an estimated \$40 billion on all GLP-1 meds in 2024, with spending projected to triple by 2030.

Consumers are spending less on food and alcohol.

Some junk-food companies and alcohol sellers are freaking out about the prospect of reduced appetites or booze cravings. As they should: The average household with at least one family member on a GLP-1 is spending about 6 percent less on groceries each month within six months of adoption. That translates to about a \$416 reduction in food and drink purchases per household a year. Spending reductions are even greater for high-income households, according to a new study by researchers at Cornell University and Numerator.

Some categories have been hit harder than others. For example, these households are spending about 11 percent less on chips and other savory snacks and 9 percent less on sweet bakery items. Select healthier foods, such as fresh fruits and yogurts, have gotten a very tiny bump.

Companies are scrambling to adapt by offering new product lines specifically tailored to GLP-1 customers, with limited success.

Other consumer-facing industries are being transformed, too.

There are some potential retail winners. For example, rapid weight loss has encouraged some patients to replace their wardrobes. The clothing rental company Rent the Runway recently reported that more customers are switching to smaller sizes than at any time in the past 15 years.

Airlines could save significant money on fuel if passengers slim down en masse, a financial firm projected. Life insurers could cash in, too, given the many mortality risks linked with chronic obesity. “Generally, running a life insurance company right before immortality is discovered — cancer vaccines, antiaging therapeutics — is a good business to be in!”

THEODORE R. JOHNSON

She’s tall, green and has a message for America

When I was in middle school, my class visited the Statue of Liberty. Our first stop was the museum, filled with old photographs of ships packed with immigrants sailing into New York Harbor. Some of the kids looked our age ... and one of them looked just like me.

In truth, this experience was a role-play scenario from a choose-your-own-adventure book, a popular genre among preadolescents decades ago. The stories turn the reader into the main character, who makes plot-altering decisions every few pages. In this one, as I stared at my doppelgänger, the museum began to shake, knocking me down. Suddenly, the floor was a wooden deck; I had been transported onto the boat in the picture — as an immigrant and an orphan. Then, decision time: “If you go below deck to meet some of the other immigrants, turn to Page 40. If you go to the front of the ship to meet the passengers who are traveling first-class, turn to Page 10.”

Your fate is in your hands. By presenting conflicting options wrapped in entertaining scenes, these books require young readers to prioritize their values and face the consequences of their decisions. Readers are also encouraged to consider matters from another person’s perspective — an important practice for democratic societies.

Those skills would be useful now. Policy questions about immigration place the destinies of others in our hands. Today, efforts to deport undocumented people must reckon with “dreamers,” those brought illegally to the United States as children and knowing no other home. Proposals to end birthright citizenship — the Constitution’s most color-blind provision — would strip away someone’s rights simply because of who their parents were. Better policy ideas can result from walking a mile in other people’s shoes. In crafting immigration policy, “what



Taryn Mitchell at her home in Greensboro, North Carolina, on June 22.

said Zac Townsend, CEO of the life insurance company Meanwhile.

Nearly every GLP-1 user I’ve interviewed in the past year has also mentioned spending money on new hobbies, such as pottery classes or pickleball leagues. Some deliberately picked activities to replace social engagements that revolve around food or alcohol; others said they simply gained the energy and self-confidence to try new things.

“I am way more active than I have been,” said Mitchell, whom I interviewed for a recent PBS NewsHour story about Ozempic economics. “I took my daughters horseback riding on the beach last Christmas, we’ve been snow tubing — things that I would have never thought to do.”

Drug spending is distorting global financial markets.

The Danish pharmaceutical company Novo Nordisk, maker of Ozempic and Wegovy, nearly single-handedly kept its home country’s economy out of recession last year while most of Europe struggled. And because Americans are the primary customers of these meds, U.S. dollars flowed heavily into Denmark, causing the Danish krone to strengthen relative to other currencies.

To keep the krone’s value steady relative to the euro, the Danish central bank had to cut interest rates. Put another way: Overweight Americans unintentionally helped Danes get cheaper mortgages.

Governments and private insurers are buckling under the cost of these meds ...

Again, GLP-1s are extremely expensive. Some states and private insurers that previously covered GLP-1s for weight loss reversed course because they risked going broke.

Recently, the Biden administration proposed requiring Medicare and Medicaid to cover these meds as a treatment for obesity as a chronic disease. This would cost Medicare alone an additional \$35 billion between 2026 and 2034, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

... but they could ultimately save tons of money on other health spending.

Obesity is a chronic disease associated with dozens of other ailments, including joint problems and cancers. So helping Americans lose weight has the potential to make the public much healthier — and reduce spending on other (costly) care.

Seven women in Mitchell’s family, for instance, had breast cancer, and both of her parents developed forms of dementia. Mitchell herself developed diabetes. All of these problems have linkages with obesity. “I don’t want to be sick,” said Mitchell, explaining why she turned to Wegovy after previously trying diets, exercise, therapy and surgery. “After taking care of my parents, I said, ‘I don’t want my children to have to take care of me.’” Her obesity is now in remission, and she no longer has diabetes.

Of course, such potential health benefits — and cost savings — will materialize more broadly only if patients keep up with their medications and adopt healthier habits to help maintain lower weights. Which is a big if.

Research suggests most patients who were prescribed these meds stop taking them within a year. Some stop because they’ve successfully reached their goal weight. But many others report stopping because of costs, unpleasant side effects, drug shortages or squeamishness about needles.

The labor market could get a boost.

Besides robbing many Americans of their energy, health and self-esteem, obesity has also robbed the U.S. economy of some of its most precious assets: workers.

Obesity-related disabilities, absenteeism, “presenteeism” (that is, showing up but not performing your best), and premature death all have enormous social and economic costs. Which means that making Americans healthier can make the labor market healthier, too, especially if interventions occur while patients are young and have many working years left. Mitchell, for instance, said she picked up a second job this summer, something she would not have had the energy to do before her recent 85-pound weight loss.

These drugs don’t yet “pay for themselves,” but if the list price gets cut in half, they would probably start to — at least, if you add up all the workforce benefits, quality of life improvements and reduced spending on other care.

Innovation, competition and expanded production capacity are already stoking a price war among drugmakers. And Medicare officials are expected to start negotiating the prices of these drugs, potentially reducing the blow to federal budgets and helping private insurers’ bargaining positions as well.

That kind of payoff is a longer-term goal, not one we’d likely see in 2025. But it’s a reason to celebrate as we ring in the new year nonetheless.





To be true to ourselves,  
we must be true to others.

– Jimmy Carter

President Carter dedicated his life to serving and advocating on behalf of all citizens. We honor the compassion, empathy and honesty with which he led, and his lasting impact on our community, state and country.





## In '25, new laws will take effect in the area

Residents of D.C., Md. and Va. to see changes across a spectrum

BY DANA MUNRO,  
MEAGAN FLYNN,  
LAURA VOZZELLA  
AND GREGORY S. SCHNEIDER

As the new year begins Wednesday, Virginians earning the minimum wage will see their salaries increase, Maryland residents will have to pay more if caught speeding in a work zone and residents in D.C. will see an expansion in access to fertility treatment.

Here is a breakdown of those policy changes and some other laws that go into effect on Wednesday:

### VIRGINIA

**Shared solar.** A plan to enable customers of Appalachian Power to purchase power through a shared solar facility must be in place by Wednesday, under identical measures House Bill 108 and Senate Bill 255. The State Corporation Commission was tasked with creating the plan affecting Virginia's second-largest utility, which requires Appalachian to submit the details of implementing such programs by July 1. Under the law, multiple customers can tap into a solar power-generating facility and receive credits on their electricity bills.

**Minimum wage.** Virginia's minimum wage increases by 41 cents at the start of the new year to \$12.41. The increase, tied to the federal consumer price index, stems from a law passed in 2020. The Democratic-controlled General Assembly passed a bill in 2024 that would have increased the minimum wage to \$13.50 this year and \$15 in 2026, but that legislation was vetoed by Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R), leaving the 2020 minimum wage law in effect.

**Consumer data.** New restrictions go into effect against the use of personal data of children under the Consumer Data Protection Act, which was modified when the General Assembly passed HB707 and SB361. Unless a parent consents, online data vendors are

SEE LAWS ON B2



VALERIE PLESCH FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

When Metrobus service struggled, the Circulator was simple, fast, reliable and safe. But expansion eroded the system's efficiency.

## It's the end of the road for the Circulator bus

BY RACHEL WEINER

The Circulator was headed from Union Station to Georgetown for one last route, and the bus was packed. Former city officials, local business owners, and urban planners hugged and put red plastic clips on their lapels. It was the bus equivalent of an Irish wake.

When the year turns over, the big red and yellow buses that have circled D.C. for the past two decades will disappear. So at 2 p.m. on New Year's Eve, Circulator boosters from across the city gathered for a final ride, followed by a toast at Clyde's on M Street NW. There were Circulator pens and chip clips, custom-made toy buses and homemade sweatsuits.

"Is there any random bus passenger here?" Joe Sternlieb, longtime head of the Georgetown Business Improvement District, shouted from the front. Emily He, 27, shyly raised her hand to cheers.

Visiting from Baltimore, she was on

Routes that were intended to 'create a renaissance' close after nearly 20 years

the Circulator for the first time and had no idea the service was being shut down.

"You'll enjoy the D6," Sternlieb assured her.

He organized the goodbye party with Dan Tangherlini, the first director of D.C.'s Department of Transportation. When they began dreaming up Circulator, they were in the same child-birthing class. They brought toddlers to the first ride out of Union Station in 2005. Now their children are all adults, one of whom joined the farewell tour.

The late 1990s was a time of precarity and opportunity for the District. Mayor Anthony A. Williams had been elected with a mandate to end years of

population loss and disinvestment. Sternlieb and Tangherlini were both in jobs that had just been created.

"We were really intentionally trying to create a renaissance in this city," Sternlieb said.

If the city were to grow, they reasoned, there had to be more and better ways to move those people around. At the time, bus service was a creaky, complicated network Metro inherited from a patchwork of companies in the 1970s — "left for those with no choice," Tangherlini said. Unable to take on an overhaul of that system, they wanted to instead show what a bus could be simple, fast, reliable and safe. They focused on connecting downtown to popular destinations: Georgetown, the National Mall and the Southwest Waterfront.

They studied bus systems and technology from around the world, managing to secure 29 unused Dutch-made buses from California. When the Circulator launched in 2005, buses

SEE CIRCULATOR ON B6

## Prince George's tops 100 homicides in 2024

County sees grim mark for fourth straight time, but other crime is down

BY JASMINE HILTON

Anthony Okoye was working at a tire shop near Capitol Heights when police say a customer upset over the cost of repairs fatally shot him. Tequia Monea Nails was holding her infant son in her apartment when her family says her ex-boyfriend fatally shot her in Fairmount Heights. And 6-year-old Ahsan Payton was at a neighborhood Independence Day party in Temple Hills when a stray bullet from a shooting killed him.

These incidents are among the more than 100 homicides Prince George's County police have investigated in 2024, the fourth straight year where killings reached triple digits after more than a decade below that mark.

Overall crime in the county dropped in 2024 compared with 2023 but remains higher than before the pandemic. Prince George's County police investigated 113 homicides — including those in its cities and towns — in 2024 as of Monday, slightly down from the 120 the year before, according to county police data.

Police and other leaders hope initiatives focused on shootings and crimes such as domestic abuse that can lead to homicides, along with a countywide effort, will slow the trend even as the

county police department grapples with a shortage of 300 officers.

"It's just not the police department. We have to think about every other entity that exists for the purpose of making Prince George's County safe or better," Prince George's County Police Chief Malik Aziz said in an interview in December. "At the very same time, we've been more focused on the categories that actually give way to it, that have not yet risen to homicides, but we're still being affected by it. Nonfatal shootings, for example — we created the gun crimes unit."

Police are hopeful the new gun crimes unit, launched in March, will reduce homicides in the coming year by focusing on shooters before they become killers, alongside Aziz's primary strategy of community policing and engagement.

"We believe that many of those nonfatal shooters are the same folks that are committing homicides," said Prince George's County Assistant Police Chief Vernon Hale III.

Domestic-related homicides persisted this year. County police investigated a dozen in 2022 but 26 the following year and at least 22 in 2024.

Prince George's County State's Attorney Aisha Braveboy worked alongside county partners to launch an initiative in October to combat the rise of family violence — crimes between relatives rather than just intimate partners.

Braveboy said that with the upcoming state legislative

SEE HOMICIDES ON B3



AMANDA ANDRADE-RHOADES FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Animals housed by Humane Rescue Alliance are overwhelming its capacity due to limited adoptions.

## A shift in helping furry friends in D.C.

BY MARISSA J. LANG

Despite the twinkling lights and garland on the walls at D.C.'s largest animal shelter this week, the final days of the year inside have been anything but merry.

Staff have been working in an anxiety-soaked sprint toward the end of a long-standing contract that will effectively split animal services in D.C. for the first time in nearly half a century.

Come Jan. 1, the Humane Rescue Alliance, the District's long-time nonprofit partner, will hand off the city's shelter and all ani-

Animal rescue alliance partner cedes some services to group in Del.

mal control services — including taking in strays and surrendered pets and responding to wounded wildlife — to the D.C. government and its new partner, a nonprofit group based in Delaware.

But the HRA is not shutting down. Instead it will continue to provide medical services and run

animal law enforcement while also expanding into areas administrators said they were previously unable to, such as health research and providing vet care to underserved communities.

Nevertheless, the transition from being D.C.'s primary animal care provider has been rocky and threatens to overwhelm the HRA's single, already overcrowded shelter, officials said. At the HRA's Oglethorpe Street facility, more than 100 dogs are housed in a facility that was originally built to contain about a third of that.

SEE HUMANE ON B2

## Bowser: 'Great meeting' in Fla.

D.C. MAYOR HAD TALKS WITH TRUMP

Both want city to reflect 'strength of our nation'

BY MEAGAN FLYNN  
AND MARTIN WEIL

D.C. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) met with President-elect Donald Trump at Mar-a-Lago on Monday, saying in a late-night statement that they discussed "shared priorities" involving the federal workforce, buildings and park space during the "great meeting."

"President Trump and I both want Washington, DC to be the best, most beautiful city in the world and we want the capital city to reflect the strength of our nation," Bowser said in a statement just before 10 p.m. Monday.

The meeting at Trump's Florida clubhouse lasted 45 minutes to an hour and also included discussion of public safety in the District, a spokeswoman for Bowser said, while declining to elaborate further. She added that Beverly Perry, a senior adviser to the mayor, also joined the meeting.

Bowser's optimistic tenor appears part of a strategy to collaborate with Trump rather than provoke him in a city where over 90 percent of voters rejected him. Trump has repeatedly antagonized the District, threatening a federal takeover in rally speeches. And, combined with a GOP Congress, D.C. is expected to be particularly vulnerable to federal intervention in its affairs.

Bowser will need Trump and the federal government's buy-in on some of the District's priorities, such as redeveloping federal land at the defunct RFK football stadium and underused federal buildings.

The latter appeared to come up in Bowser's meeting with Trump. She said in the statement that they discussed areas for collaboration between the city and federal governments, particularly in regard to the federal workforce, underused federal buildings, parks and green spaces, and infrastructure.

"I am optimistic that we will continue to find common ground with the President during his second term, and we look forward to supporting a successful inauguration on January 20," Bowser said.

Spokespeople with the Trump transition team did not answer questions about the meeting.

Since the pandemic and remote work upended D.C.'s downtown, Bowser has lobbied the federal government to both return its workers to the office full-time or else turn over the half-vacant federal buildings to the city to do something productive with them, such as turning them into housing or retail. Bowser is likely to find common ground here with the real estate

SEE MEETING ON B3

### TODAY'S WEATHER

8 a.m.	Noon	4 p.m.	8 p.m.
47°	51°	48°	42°

High today at approx. 12 p.m.: 51°  
Precip: 0% Wind: W 12-25 mph

For weather news, go to B6

### THE DISTRICT

2 are injured, 1 critically, in apartment building fire in Columbia Heights. B3

### VIRGINIA

Mother who was stabbed while holding her toddler in Arlington dies. B3

### OBITUARIES

Marisa Paredes, 78, brought a zest to multiple Pedro Almodóvar films. B4



# New laws expand health insurance coverage in DMV

LAWS FROM BI

prohibited from using children’s data for targeted advertising or geolocation, and the law limits how long vendors can retain such data in the cases where use is allowed.

**Electric vehicle mandates.** Effective Wednesday, Virginia will no longer follow California’s vehicle emissions standards. Virginia was one of several states that adopted California’s policies, which are stricter than federal emissions standards for automobiles and establish a fast-track for requiring that all new vehicles sold have zero emissions. Youngkin announced the switch in June. Democrats accused him of overstepping his authority, but state Attorney General Jason Miyares (R) issued an opinion saying it was permissible.

**Cancer screenings.** Health insurers will be required to cover exams and lab tests for colorectal cancer screenings, including follow-up colonoscopies after positive tests. The law applies to individual and group health plans and exempts the screenings from any deductible or other cost-sharing requirements.

MARYLAND

**Work zone speed limits.** A bill aimed at creating harsher consequences for speeding in work zones takes full effect Wednesday. Initial provisions, including increased fines for speeding that’s caught on camera, went into effect June 1. A more comprehensive tiered system, with penalties ranging from \$60 to \$1,000 depending on the speed and if workers are present in the work zone, starts on the first of the year. The legislation was created partly in response to a March 2023 inci-

dent during which six highway workers were killed in Baltimore County when a car swerved into a work zone.

**Hearing aid coverage.** In 2025, health insurance companies and similar entities will be required to cover hearing aids if they are prescribed, fitted and dispensed by a licensed audiologist. Carriers can cap the benefit at \$1,400 per hearing aid for each hearing-impaired ear every 36 months. The law applies to health plans issued, delivered or renewed in Maryland on or after the first of the year.

**Opioid overdose care.** Starting in the new year, Maryland hospitals will be required to possess the necessary medications for patients with opioid addiction and be capable of treating opioid-related overdoses or other opioid-related emergencies. This will require hospitals to stock appropriate medication, implement practices for screening and diagnosing patients with opioid-use disorder, develop treatment protocols and help facilitate patients’ transitions into community-based treatments if they choose.

**D.C.**

**Fertility treatment.** D.C. will require insurance coverage of the diagnosis and treatment of infertility — medical care that can cost tens of thousands of dollars and put couples in debt. Under the law, insurance plans offered by employers in the District and through D.C.’s health insurance marketplace, DC Health Link, will be required to cover three rounds of in vitro fertilization. It would also cover other medical costs related to transferring an embryo to a surrogate if a woman is unable to carry a pregnancy or if the aspiring parents are a same-



MARVIN JOSEPH/THE WASHINGTON POST

A new tiered system for speeding fines in work zones debuts in Maryland on Wednesday, with penalties ranging from \$60 to \$1,000.



ASTRID RIECKEN FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Lights Out DC volunteer Stephanie Dalke holds a dead yellow-bellied sapsucker in October. Effective this year, new commercial or multifamily buildings must be built with bird-friendly materials.

sex male couple.

**Child tax credit.** Other good news for families is that 2025 will be the first year covered under D.C.’s new child tax credit, which will give households with children under 6 up to \$420 per child, depending on income levels.

**Student loans.** D.C. is also expected to create a new “bill of rights” for student loan borrowers. The law will expand consumer protections that prohibit deceptive or abusive practices to include student loan servicers, while eliminating debt for those with total or permanent disability, among other things.

**Mitigating bird deaths.** Also starting in 2025, new commercial or multifamily buildings must be built with bird-friendly materials intended to prevent birds from flying into them. Every year, more than a billion birds die crashing into buildings in the United States, including hundreds in D.C., as documented by a group of volunteers, who have advocated to put up special bird film on buildings like the Walter E. Washington Convention Center pedestrian bridge.

# Care for rescued animals in D.C. will shift, but longtime partner is still around

HUMANE FROM BI

Temporary kennels — tall, 5-by-5-foot metal cages with opaque tarps draped over three of their four sides — have been packed into the facility’s warehouse and training spaces. If more animals come in, officials said, they’ll have to move dogs into the only empty spaces left: conference rooms and vacant offices.

That’s partly the result of a year that saw adoptions fail to keep up with the number of animals coming into the shelter. But, administrators said, it was compounded by the relatively short runway the HRA had to wrap up and transition out of its 45-year partnership with the city.

Officials said they worry that the change will stoke public confusion and spur an unsustainable influx of dogs into an already overcrowded shelter, worsening conditions and overburdening an already worn-out staff.

“What keeps me up at night is if we can’t make some real movement in getting dogs out, we’re going to be the most overcrowded we’ve ever been,” said Mia Navedo-Williams, the HRA’s vice president of marketing and communications. The organization has ramped up its short-term foster solicitations to make room for any dogs coming this week from across town.

“All year we’ve been facing this capacity crisis,” she said on Dec. 20. “We’re already in overflow housing.”

Nationally, dog adoptions have fallen about 5 percent since 2019, Navedo-Williams said. But in the District, the dip has been more dramatic. Dog adoptions are down about 23 percent compared with pre-pandemic rates.

This year, the HRA has taken in about 7,000 domestic animals and 1,600 wild animals as part of its animal care and control services. It runs foster programs

that allow adoptable animals to be kept in homes rather than in the shelter and a volunteer network of about 350 people.

The HRA notified D.C. around this time last year that it wanted to renegotiate the terms of the contract that it has held with the District since 1980. Several of the contract’s requirements were outdated and “burdensome” as the cost of animal care and control far outstripped the amount the agency was receiving from the city, said Kate Meghji, the HRA’s chief operating officer.

The organization prepared several alternatives for the District. But Meghji said the city rejected them all, asserting instead that it wanted to retain control of the regulatory and enforcement pieces of animal control while having HRA continue to operate its shelters.

“There’s always friction if you’re the one housing the animals being impounded but you have no control over which animals — or why they’re being impounded,” Meghji said.

The HRA declined and said in August that it would no longer be administering animal control for D.C. But the city’s new partner, Brandywine Valley SPCA, was not announced until November.

Arian Gibson, the senior deputy director of D.C.’s Environmental Health Administration, a division of D.C. Health, said in a statement that “the short time frame caused by the HRA’s notice that they did not plan on renewing with D.C. Health” prompted the city to select a group he described as “a highly respected organization with extensive experience managing government animal shelters.”

Brandywine Valley SPCA, which has run shelters in Delaware and Pennsylvania, did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

As the year draws to a close, officials said, both agencies are



MARISSA LANG/THE WASHINGTON POST

The number of animals at the Humane Rescue Alliance’s headquarters on Oglethorpe Street NW has pushed past capacity as the organization prepares to end its 45-year contract with the District.

gearing up for a public education campaign they hope will help Washingtonians understand which organization is which — and what this means for the animals of D.C.

Starting in 2025, D.C. Health and Brandywine Valley SPCA will operate three outposts — two shelters and a retail space — and oversee everything to do with animal control in the District, including taking in strays, conducting dangerous dog investigations, responding to reports of wounded or dangerous wildlife, and providing adoption and fostering services, according to D.C. Health.

The city’s shelter at 1201 New York Avenue NE will continue to take in animals. The District has acquired a 30,000-square foot



AMANDA ANDRADE-RHOADES FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

HRA is shutting down its operation, ceding control to a nonprofit group in Delaware, but will continue to provide medical services.

space at the southernmost tip of D.C., at 2 DC Village Lane SW near the Maryland border.

A retail space in Ivy City, at 1514-1516 Okie Street NE, will serve as an outpost for adoptable animals, the announcement said, and will house at least 70 kennels.

The HRA will continue to oversee the District’s animal law enforcement and provide medical and other field services throughout the city, including a pet food pantry, vaccine clinics, spaying and neutering services and at-home visits for pet owners in need. The city aims to provide similar medical services.

“The way I see it, it’s better for the animals to have more sources of help,” Navedo-Williams said. “But it will mean we’ll have to work harder to make sure we have the volunteers we need and fosters we need and resources we need to save as many adoptable animals as possible.”

Meghji said that the nonprofit also plans to continue efforts to open a community veterinary clinic to serve residents in Wards 7 and 8, which are predominantly Black and have limited access to veterinary care. The HRA also will continue to adopt and foster out animals and provide shelter space for any pets surrendered by their owners — so long as there are available kennels.

Several staff members from HRA took positions with Brandywine Valley SPCA, officials from both nonprofits said. Adoptable pets will continue to be available through HRA at its Oglethorpe Street shelter, and starting Jan. 2 via Brandywine Valley SPCA at its New York Avenue facility.

“It’s going to take time for the community to understand which organization is which,” Meghji said. “But I know that if people call us and need help, we’re going to get them to the right place. And I know that Brandywine will do the same.”



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# Bowser, Trump meeting included talks about public safety

MEETING FROM B1

magnate, who has also repeatedly called for the return of federal workers to the office.

But Bowser — who during Trump’s first term emerged as a foil to the president and rolled out Black Lives Matter Plaza in view of the White House — gave no indication Monday night on whether she and Trump discussed any of their differences, or any of Trump’s more incendiary rhetoric targeting the District, such as his derision of the city as a “killing field” necessitating federal control.

Crime in urban centers has been a particular fixation of Trump’s, including in the nation’s capital. Violent crime is down 35 percent in D.C. compared with last year, a reduction that Bowser and city officials have been frequently highlighting.

Just before Trump was elected in November, Bowser framed the stakes of the presidential contest in stark terms, saying on WAMU public radio in early November that “yes, we’re concerned that an unhinged president that is concerned about only his power might try to use the District of Columbia to make a point to cities across America.”

“We’ve heard his attacks. We’re clear about him, that he has disdain for American cities, and the fact that D.C. has limited home rule and does not have statehood makes us susceptible to these threats,” she said Nov. 1.

Immediately after the election, Bowser struck a conciliatory tone, pledging to facilitate a smooth inauguration and to “pursue a collaborative approach to our federal priorities in the District.”

The city traditionally has played a major role in providing security for the inauguration. Recently, Bowser, D.C. Council Chairman Phil Mendelson (D) and the city’s top fiscal officer went to Capitol Hill for a budget hearing, where they advocated to substantially increase federal security funds to go to the D.C. police, whose members staff the inauguration and frequently work overtime to support federal events or help protect federal VIPs.

Congress in its final spending bill budgeted \$90 million for D.C. police to support federal events, including the inauguration — the largest sum in decades and perhaps an early result of the city’s strategy to work collaboratively with Republicans. The fund includes 40 percent more funding for the inauguration than for Joe Biden’s in 2021, and 50 percent more than for Trump’s first.

Hours after the spending bill passed, Bowser and the city secured another major congressional win: In early-morning Senate action Dec. 21, Congress passed legislation giving D.C. control of the federal park land surrounding the unused RFK Stadium for 99 years, allowing the city to redevelop the land for a



VALERIE PLESCH FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**Muriel E. Bowser said she had a productive meeting with President-elect Donald Trump; she appears to be taking a convivial approach.**

host of purposes, including a possible Washington Commanders stadium for the NFL team.

Bowser may ultimately need to negotiate the terms of the transfer of the land — which the

federal government will continue to own — with the Trump administration. It was not immediately

clear if Bowser and Trump’s discussion of park land included RFK.

## THE DISTRICT

# Two injured, one critically, in a Columbia Heights apartment building fire

BY EMMA UBER  
AND PETER HERMANN

When Ronnie Solomon awakened around 1:30 a.m. Tuesday to the blaring of alarms, he could smell smoke. He tugged on some clothes and ran out of his Columbia Heights apartment to find more than 100 firefighters fighting flames emanating from the building next door.

While his building’s fire alarm screeched, the burning building’s

alarms remained quiet. He could only watch the fire blaze as authorities corralled him and his neighbors onto warming buses a few blocks away. “I was just worried I wasn’t going to be able to go home,” he said.

Solomon was able to return to his apartment around 4 a.m.; nearly three dozen other people were not so lucky. The fire injured two people and displaced 35 residents in the Northwest Washington neighborhood, according to

the city’s fire department. It was not clear what caused the blaze.

The first report came at 12:55 a.m. on New Year’s Eve and went to two alarms, drawing crews to the 1400 block of Chapin Street NW, near Meridian Hill Park. Fire officials said two people were rescued and hospitalized, one in critical condition and the other in serious condition. Firefighters rescued some residents via ladders. Vito Maggiolo, a spokesman for the D.C. fire department, said both

victims were women. The fire was largely out by 2 a.m., although firefighters continued to confront pockets of flames.

Those forced from the building were taken to a shelter at the Columbia Heights Recreation Center on Tuesday morning, Maggiolo said. By 1 p.m., a handful had gathered in the alley behind their apartments, sporting their pajamas, as a restoration crew issued them masks and hard hats to briefly enter the building and grab

necessities. They discussed the heroics they witnessed by firefighters and their neighbors, with one man carrying his mother out of the burning building.

A woman who said she was among those hospitalized came to salvage some of her belongings before going to stay with a friend.

Residents said the building’s fire alarm never went off, adding to the chaos and confusion. Maggiolo said the alarm needed to be activated manually. Each apart-

ment unit is individually owned, D.C. property records show.

The American Red Cross and D.C. agencies were working to connect with the displaced residents of 20 affected apartments, Maggiolo said.

Ten families had already received support, Red Cross spokesperson Bethany Bray Patterson said. Patterson added that the Red Cross is still working to reach all displaced residents because some were out of town for the holidays.

# Pr. George’s crime still higher than pre-pandemic

HOMICIDES FROM B1

session, she’s pushing for a bill that would create a domestic-abuser registry for those who have been convicted of felony domestic violence.

“One crime is too many, because for the victim, for the victim’s family, it is devastating,” Braveboy said.

Prince George’s police have made an arrest in nearly 70 percent of homicides in 2024, according to county police data. According to the state’s attorney’s office, homicide unit prosecutors have an over 90 percent conviction rate.

Among the unsolved cases is the killing of 16-year-old DeMarco Bradford.

DeMarco, of D.C., was shot outside an apartment complex in Oxon Hill on the night of April 22 and died days later, police said. He’s one of 10 juvenile victims of homicides in 2024 in Prince George’s, according to county police data.

Homicide unit detectives canvassed the area for information just before Christmas Day, working to piece together a motive, which remains unclear. They’re still looking for multiple people who hopped out of a light-colored sedan and fired at DeMarco and his friend, who survived.

“There’s no detail that is too insignificant to pass along to us,” Capt. Craig Winegardner said.

While homicides remained steady, overall crime declined 9 percent in the county, including a 32 percent drop in carjackings, which plagued the county during the covid-19 pandemic. Nonfatal shootings are slightly down, with 240 as of Saturday compared with 259 at the same point in 2023, according to county police data.

But crime remains about 40 percent higher than in 2020 — with county data showing about 16,100 total crimes in 2020 and nearly 22,300 crimes in 2024.

Of the more than 4,600 violent crimes in 2024, about 2,000 of them were no-weapon assaults, including domestic violence assaults. Those categories weren’t closely tracked until about five years ago under the new National Incident-Based Reporting System, Aziz said.

Communities in Districts 7 and 8 are home to areas hit hardest with homicides, includ-



JASMINE HILTON/THE WASHINGTON POST

**Prince George’s County police Chief Malik Aziz says crime reduction is the “number one” priority in 2025. County police investigated 113 homicides in 2024 as of Monday, down from 120 the year before.**

ing Suitland and Camp Springs.

County Council member Krystal Oriadha (D-District 7) hosted community walks this year in affected neighborhoods to hear about people’s safety concerns. She said the community needs more preventative resources to address violence, which takes hard-fought funding.

“It’s very easy to talk about the surface issues. If you want to talk about ‘We need more police,’ that’s an easy conversation to have, and everyone wants to have it,” Oriadha said. “But when we talk about ‘Why don’t we have buses for after-school activity? Why don’t we have more free recreational activities for our kids?’ ... It is very hard to fund prevention. No one really wants to make it so crime doesn’t happen in our community.”

Oriadha created a fund from her office to help victims’ families with resources such as counseling. The fund is named after 14-year-old Khamya Ferrell, who was fatally shot in May inside an apartment in District Heights, she said.

A teenager was arrested in her killing. And while young people

make up fewer of the gun charges in the county than adults, they are driving certain crimes.

Citizen robberies, the police term for robberies of a person rather than a business, were up slightly this year. Young people in particular were being robbed of luxury-brand shoes and clothing, Aziz said, a trend that led to the uptick. In 2019, there were over 500 robberies of people in the county. Now, there are close to 700.

“They’ve been very problematic for us,” Aziz said. “New opportunities come when people see it and say, ‘Well, I’m not going to pay \$600 for a luxury ... shirt or shoes, but I’ll take yours.’”

Police tend to arrest more young people for robbing people, too. According to county police data, as of mid-December, 144 juveniles had been arrested for robbing people, compared with 57 adults.

Carjacking arrests reflect the same dilemma. Ninety-six juveniles have been arrested for carjacking compared with 36 adults, as of mid-December.

Of the over 1,200 firearm arrests, 208 of those have been

juveniles as of mid-December, according to county police data.

County Council Vice Chair Edward Burroughs III (D-District 8), who sponsored a bill in 2024 allowing curfews for young people in commercial zones, said the county should be proactive when addressing crime. Youths should have more access to recreational programs and a quality education with a path for employment.

“What we know is that if you have a young person who is engaged in sports, the arts, activities, exposure opportunities, mentoring groups, and they receive a quality education, they’re not going to be out here wreaking havoc on the community,” Burroughs said.

Aziz said crime reduction remains the department’s “number one” priority in 2025. Externally, he said, this means working with communities, partnering with local organizations and hosting outreach opportunities with young people and seniors.

Internally, this means prioritizing “better health and wellness for officers,” Aziz said, building on a promising increase of applicants for the force in 2024.

## VIRGINIA

# Mother dies two weeks after being stabbed while holding toddler

BY EMMA UBER

A woman who was stabbed while holding a toddler earlier this month near Pentagon City Mall in Arlington has died, police said in a news release.

Iman Gaye, 26, died at a hospital Monday morning from injuries she suffered from the Dec. 14 stabbing, according to the release.

Gaye and the toddler, as well as another child, were walking on a sidewalk in the 900 block of Army Navy Drive at about 9:45 p.m. when police say Leonardo Reyes, 23, attacked. He stabbed Gaye and the toddler, who suffered serious injuries and were

taken to hospitals, police said. The second child was not injured.

The toddler left the hospital on Dec. 23, according to the release.

Police say they found Reyes under a parked car inside a nearby parking garage and arrested him. He faces a charge of second-degree murder in addition to aggravated malicious wounding, contributing to the delinquency of a child and child abuse. He is being held without bond in the Arlington County Detention Facility.

Mark Thrash, a lawyer listed for Reyes in court documents, did not immediately return a request for comment Tuesday.



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OBITUARIES

MARISA PAREDES, 78

Spanish actress brought life to multiple Almodóvar films

BY HARRISON SMITH

Marisa Paredes, a Spanish actress who has died at 78, brought some of filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar's most fantastical creations to vibrant, idiosyncratic life. Beginning with the black comedy "Dark Habits" (1983), in which she played an LSD-using nun known as Sister Manure, she appeared in a half-dozen of the acclaimed director's films, often playing artists and Bohemians with a sensuous or seductive side.

Ms. Paredes starred as a cabaret singer involved in a murderous love triangle in Almodóvar's "High Heels" (1991) and was nominated for a Goya Award, the Spanish equivalent of an Oscar, for his mordant comedy "The Flower of My Secret" (1995). She played a best-selling romance novelist, Leo, who is stuck in an unhappy marriage and finds herself reviewing — and panning — her own books for a newspaper.

"Drinking," she observes, "is all I am really good at."

The film propelled Ms. Paredes to wider renown outside Spain, as did her performances as a glamorous theater star in Almodóvar's "All About My Mother" (1999), which won the Oscar for best foreign language film, and as the housekeeper to a mad scientist (Antonio Banderas) in "The Skin I Live In" (2011), a gender-bending thriller about a plastic surgeon holding a young woman captive.

"His women are very brave, never passive," Ms. Paredes once said of the director's movies. "Sure, he makes his women go through hell, but they don't stay there."

Reviewing "The Flower of My Secret" for the New York Times, film critic Caryn James called Ms. Paredes "the most humane of Mr. Almodóvar's regular actresses," a

group that grew to include Penélope Cruz, Chus Lampreave, Carmen Maura, Rossy De Palma and Cecilia Roth.

It took time for the duo to find their rhythm. According to Ms. Paredes, the director was irritated by the way she would ask questions on the set of "Dark Habits," trying to figure out her character's thoughts, motivations and feelings. "He thought I was too arrogant," she told New Zealand's Sunday Star-Times newspaper in 1996, "but that soon gave way to trust. From then on, I put myself in his hands like you'd throw yourself into the arms of a lover."

In Almodóvar films, characters are often pushed to extremes: Leo, in "The Flower of My Secret," attempts to take her own life. Ms. Paredes managed to deliver performances that toggled seamlessly between comedy and drama, winning over audiences while still getting laughs. As Leo, "Paredes makes you feel so deeply for her you want to take her husband, and a friend with whom he's having an affair, and wring their necks," wrote *Newsday* reviewer Jack Mathews.

Ms. Paredes also worked with Mexican filmmaker Arturo Ripstein, appearing in his macabre crime movie "Deep Crimson" (1996), and played actor-director Robert Benigni's wealthy mother-in-law in "Life Is Beautiful" (1997), a tender portrait of love and family in World War II-era Italy, which won three Academy Awards.

A few years later, she took on a far darker role for Guillermo del Toro's "The Devil's Backbone" (2001), a Gothic horror set during the Spanish Civil War. Ms. Paredes donned a prosthetic leg to play a woman running a secluded orphanage, where children run around while trying to avoid setting off an unexploded bomb,



GETTY IMAGES

Marisa Paredes applies makeup in a scene from "All About My Mother," a 1999 melodrama by famed Spanish director Pedro Almodóvar. Ms. Paredes appeared in several of Almodóvar's acclaimed films.

dropped in the courtyard by Francisco Franco's troops.

The youngest of four children, María Luisa Paredes Bartolomé was born in Madrid on April 3, 1946. Her mother was a housekeeper, and her father worked at a brewery. The family lived on the Plaza de Santa Ana, a few steps from the historic Teatro Español, where Ms. Paredes would watch the actors come and go each day.

At age 12, she dropped out of school and began working as a dressmaker's apprentice to help support the family. Around that time, she saw her first play; decades later, she had forgotten the title but still remembered how she went home mimicking

each part.

Ms. Paredes also developed a love of movies, especially the American Civil War epic "Gone With the Wind" (1939). When its heroine, Scarlett O'Hara (Vivien Leigh), announces her climb out of poverty — "As God is my witness, I'll never be hungry again" — Ms. Paredes knew just what she meant. "I felt very close to her," Ms. Paredes told the news agency EFE last year, "perhaps because there was no food to spare in my house either."

At age 14, she made her big-screen debut with a bit part in "Police Calling 091," a 1960 crime film. It was filming at the square outside her home, she recalled,

and the filmmakers needed someone to play a prostitute.

She later went to acting school in Madrid and performed in classical dramas, including plays by Federico García Lorca and Arthur Miller. But she said she initially struggled to transition into film, in part because of her appearance. "I've always been too thin, and blond, blue-eyed and freckled," she told the Times in 2001, contrasting herself with the classical "Spanish beauty with black hair and brown eyes."

Her breakthrough came in the 1980s, when Ms. Paredes appeared in debut features by filmmakers Fernando Trueba and Agustí Villaronga. The latter cast

her as the wife of a former Nazi doctor — her character is killed by one of the physician's victims — in his 1986 revenge fantasy "In a Glass Cage."

Ms. Paredes appeared in 120 movies and television shows in all, almost all of them in Spanish. She was elected to a three-year term as president of the Spanish film academy in 2000 and was presented with an honorary Goya Award in 2018. The academy announced her death but did not provide additional details.

Spanish media reported she died Dec. 17 in Madrid, after being hospitalized with a heart problem. On social media, Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez called her "one of the most important actresses our country has ever produced."

Information on survivors was not immediately available. Ms. Paredes had been in a relationship since 1983 with José María "Chema" Prado, a photographer and former director of the national film library. She had a daughter, actress María Isasi, from an earlier relationship with filmmaker Antonio Isasi-Isasmendi.

Ms. Paredes linked the growing success of her film career to the sense of "openness and freedom" that swept through Spain after the end of the Franco regime in 1975. But while attending France's Lumière Film Festival as a special guest last year, she told EFE that she detected an unsettling "kind of apathy" in the public and warned against the return of the "extreme right wing" in Spanish politics.

"I feel that in the dictatorship people fought, they went out into the streets, risking a lot in the streets," she said. "In democracy it is as if everything has been achieved, and we believe that it is there and that nobody is going to touch it. And that's not true."

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### IN MEMORIAM DORSEY



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April 23, 1956 - January 1, 2021  
There is no separation in spirit  
Your sweet spirit lingers on  
**Love Mother, Elaine Dorsey and Family**



### DEATH NOTICE BELLAS

**RABBI MATTHEW ISAAC BELLAS**  
On Monday, December 30, 2024, Rabbi MATTHEW ISAAC BELLAS of Olney, MD, Beloved husband of Oksana V. Bellas. Devoted father of Jacob (fiancée, Rivka Magler), Maya and Aliza Bellas. Loving son of Renee Switzer and the late Joel Bellas. Dear brother of Adam (Britt Baxter) Bellas and Jennifer Wildes. Funeral services will be held on Wednesday, January 1, 2025, 10 a.m. at B'nai Shalom of Olney, 18401 Burtfield Drive, Olney, MD. Interment following at Judean Memorial Gardens, Olney, MD. Shiva will be observed at the late residence, times will be announced. Memorial contributions may be made to the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School, [www.cesjds.org](http://www.cesjds.org) or to B'nai Shalom of Olney, [www.bnaishalomofolney.org](http://www.bnaishalomofolney.org). Arrangements entrusted to TORCHINSKY HEBREW FUNERAL HOME, 202-541-1001.

### EHRlich

**MARLENE R. EHRlich**  
On Tuesday, December 31, 2024, of Rockville, MD, Beloved wife of the late Richard Ehrlich; devoted mother of Michael Ehrlich (Julie) and Rebecca (Scott) Hallam, loving grandmother of Sarah, Carly, Hannah and Lily. Funeral services will be held Thursday, January 2, 2025, 12:30 p.m. at Shaare Torah, 1409 Main Street, Gaithersburg, MD 20878 with interment to follow at Parklawn Memorial Park, 12800 Veers Mill Rd., Rockville, MD 20853. Family will be observing Shiva at the Hallam Residence. Memorial contributions may be made to JSSA to the Melville and Beatrice Ehrlich Fund. Services entrusted to Sagel Bloomfield Danzansky Goldberg Funeral Care. [www.sagelbloomfield.com](http://www.sagelbloomfield.com)

### FAVIN

**PEARL FAVIN**  
On Saturday, December 28, 2024, Pearl Favin, (Age 101), of Silver Spring, MD. Beloved wife of the late Irving Favin; devoted mother of Michael (Nancy), Robert (Mary Lu), and Martin (Susanna); cherished grandmother of Benjamin, Katherine, Joshua, Laura, Jenna, and Levon; and eight great-grandchildren. Graveside services will be held on Thursday, January 2, at 1 p.m. at Mt. Lebanon Cemetery in Adelphi, MD. Arrangements by Hines-Rinaldi Funeral Home under Jewish Funeral Practices Committee of Greater Washington Contract.

### GALLAGHER



**MARILYN RAUSCHER GALLAGHER**  
Marilyn Rauscher Gallagher, 91, of Falls Church died on December 23, 2024, surrounded by her family. She is survived by her children, Ann Rauscher of Arlington, VA, Frederick Rauscher (Delores) of East Lansing, MI, Richard Rauscher (John Blixt) of Maplewood, NJ, and Kurt Rauscher (Ann) of Herndon; 10 grandchildren; and numerous friends and family. She was preceded in death by her husbands, Frederick J. Rauscher and Joseph A. Gallagher; her brother, William C. Gallagher; and her stepdaughter, Denise Rokholt. Visitation will be at Murphy Funeral Home in Arlington from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, January 2, and 12 noon to 2 p.m. Friday, followed by a funeral Mass at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Falls Church at 2:30 p.m. To view the full obituary, please visit [www.murphyfuneralhomes.com](http://www.murphyfuneralhomes.com)



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The Washington Post

### DEATH NOTICE RIDLEY



**WINSTON C. RIDLEY JR. PASTOR, DMIN.**

On Tuesday, December 17, 2024, the beloved husband of First Lady Bonita LuRose Lee Ridley. Also surviving are his sister Rob in Caroline Ridley, his sister-in-law Kim Lee Robinson, aunts, uncles a host of loving relatives and friends. On Saturday, January 4, 2025, at The Greater First Baptist Church, Mt. Pleasant Plains, 2701 13th Street NW, visitation will be held from 9 a.m. until time of service at 11 a.m. Interment will be held Monday, January 6, 2025, at Restland Memorial Cemetery, Monroeville, PA. In lieu of flowers donations may be made to Daughters of Zion-GFBC Women's Ministry, 2701 13th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009. <https://www.mcguire-services.com/>



### DEATH NOTICE

### ROGERS



**ASHLEY EAST ROGERS 1979-2024**

Ashley East Rogers, loving mother of Graham and Sebastian Rogers, beloved wife of Aaron Rogers and daughter of Marlys East, a philanthropy professional who built and grew programs to advance arts, culture, science, education and international development, passed away peacefully surrounded by her family on December 25, 2024 in Falls Church, Virginia. She was 45. Ashley died from complications of Leiomyosarcoma, a rare cancer that she bravely fought for nearly two years with dignity, grace and perseverance. She demonstrated a rare strength throughout her battle while still working, advocating for her health, and also giving everything she could to help others. Ashley led an amazing, full life. She was born in Columbia, Maryland and raised by her mother, Marlys, with whom she shared a love for the arts and culture, a devotion to community, and a deep faith in God. She inherited her mother's strong work ethic, attention to detail, and empathy for others which was clear in every interaction. Ashley attended the Garrison Forest School before going on to study Government and Art History at Bowdoin College. While in college Ashley spent a summer interning in Boston where she met Aaron, who would become her partner in life for more than twenty-five years. Their love for one another grew out of a strong core of shared values, and a passion for adventure and seeing the world. From their first time together in Paris that firmly anchored their bond, to many other trips around the globe, she never shied away from the chance to explore and experience other cultures, people, and places. As soon as their boys were born, they got passports and were included alongside. Domestic adventures spanned the country but always included an annual return to Drakes Island in Maine, which her mom introduced to her when she was young. This place became a second home to celebrate her favorite holiday, the 4th of July, sharing with her boys the pleasures of days on the beach and lobster bakes surrounded by family and friends. Her professional life was a testament to always seeking to do what you love. She began her career in philanthropy at the Boston

### FUNERAL HOMES HOLIDAY HOURS

**PAID DEATH NOTICES  
HOLIDAY HOURS**

**Tuesday**  
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11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

**Wednesday**  
January 1, 2025  
**SELF SERVICE ONLY**

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### DEATH NOTICE

### DEATH NOTICE

### DEATH NOTICE

### CLARK



**ELISE J. CLARK**  
Elise J. Clark, 94, of Ashburn, Virginia, formerly of Springfield VA, passed away on Sunday, December 15, 2024. Born in Alexandria, VA on February 28, 1930, to Effie V. and Marion H. Johnson, she graduated from George Washington

High School in Alexandria, VA and George Washington University. Elise worked in the office of Senator Edward J. Thye of Minnesota where she caught the eye of the elevator operator, Charles Clark, of Cherokee IA. They were married on December 19, 1953. Charles died in 2020 soon after their 67th anniversary. She devoted her life to raising their three children and was faithfully active in her church, Westwood Baptist. In 1979, Charles and Elise purchased Candlewick of Alexandria, which they operated for 18 years. She is survived by her children Hank Clark (Mary), Columbia, MO; Ann Lockhart, Cary, NC; Julie Clark, Sterling, VA; grandchildren Rachel, Neal, Jessica, Paul, Claire, and numerous nieces and nephews. She is preceded in death by her parents and brother Carey K. Johnson. Memorial Service will be at Westwood Baptist Church, Springfield VA on January 4, 2025, 11 a.m. Interment at Ivy Hill Cemetery, Alexandria VA. Arrangements provided by Demaine, Springfield VA.

### MOSHOVITIS



**JAMES HARRY MOSHOVITIS**  
Jimmy Moshovitis, beloved husband, father and grandfather died peacefully in his sleep on December 28, 2024. He was 99 years old. Jimmy is predeceased by his wife of 57 years, Zoe Moshovitis, had two children Diana and Harry, sister Vivian and late sister Georgia, son-in-law Michael, and four grandchildren Zoe, Jason, Skylar and Maia. Jimmy had many nieces, nephews and countless friends who will miss him dearly.

Jimmy will be remembered as embodying all the remarkable traits of the "Greatest Generation". Selfless service, hard work, overcoming obstacles and achievement beyond imagination. Jimmy, like many first-generation immigrants, started out with nothing. Jimmy finished high school and enlisted in the Navy. Jimmy was a radio man on a ship near Japan during WW2. He rarely spoke of his time in the Pacific, but being a radio man he was a prime target for the kamikaze pilots. He participated in the infamous battles of Okinawa and Iwo Jima and was extremely proud of his service that changed the course of history.

After the war, Jimmy started working in his father's restaurant and quickly realized "I would much rather be the landlord than the tenant" to quote him. Slowly he started saving money until he could buy the restaurant. He continued buying up small commercial properties in downtown DC and earned the nickname "The Spike" once the DC Metro was announced. Jimmy often was the last domino to fall and would hold out until he was offered the price he wanted. He did all this with no lawyers or accountants. His weapons were a bag of donuts and fresh coffee. He became a legend in the DC real estate circle.

Jimmy had deep faith in the Greek Orthodox church and was an extremely active and generous member of Leadership 100, FAITH and the St Sophia Cathedral.

Jimmy loved to travel and traveled around the world with Zoe and had many fabulous adventures with dear friends. Jimmy loved fishing in Alaska and always brought home delicious fish for family and friends.

Jimmy was a very passionate and equally sensitive person. He could be tough and also easily brought to tears. He loved sports, was a fierce tennis player and loved cheering his grandchildren on. Jimmy was truly a one-of-a-kind, was a huge inspiration to many, and will be terribly missed by all who knew him.

Funeral service starting with a viewing will be held at the St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral starting at 10 a.m. on Saturday, January 4. The interment following will be private





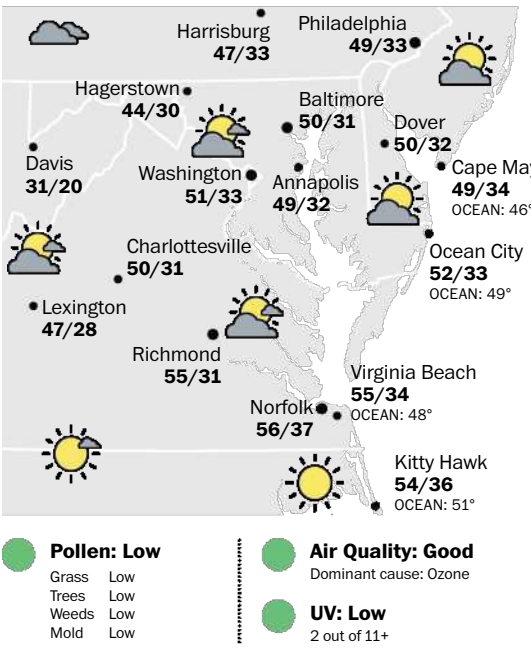
# THE WEATHER

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## New year, new trend

The new year will come in with a gusty flavor as winds blow from the west at 15 to 25 mph with gusts of 30 to 35 mph. Partly to mostly sunny skies will prevail as highs reach the upper 40s to low 50s. In the evening, skies will be mostly clear and colder, but still breezy with lows in the upper 20s to low 30s. Wind chills will dip closer to 20 degrees as a frigid trend that will last at least through the next week moves in.

### REGION



**Blue Ridge:** Today, cloudy, windy, colder; a little snow with little or no accumulation in southern parts. High 29 to 33. Winds west-northwest 20–30 mph. Tonight, mainly cloudy; windy. Low 22 to 26. Winds west-northwest 15–25 mph.

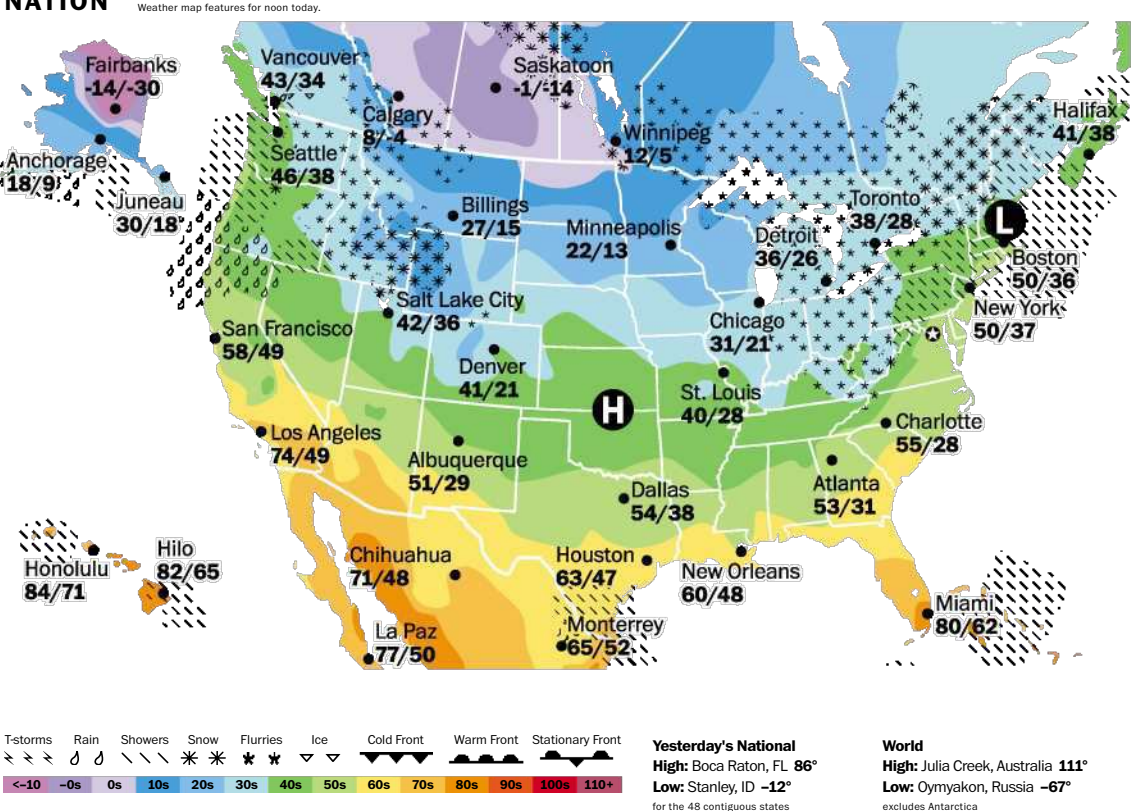
**Atlantic beaches:** Today, winds gusting past 40 mph. Cooler, sunny in the south; mostly cloudy elsewhere. Gusty winds can blow around unsecured objects. High 49 to 56. Winds west 15–25 mph. Tonight, windy. Low 33 to 37. Winds west 15–25 mph. Thursday, cooler.

**Waterways:** *Upper Potomac River:* Today, mostly cloudy. Wind west-northwest 10–20 knots. Waves 2–4 feet. Visibility generally clear. • *Lower Potomac and Chesapeake Bay:* Today, mainly cloudy. Wind west 15–25 knots. Waves 2–4 feet on the Lower Potomac and the Chesapeake Bay. • *River Stages:* The stage at Little Falls will be around 3.20 feet today, rising to 3.30 Thursday. Flood stage at Little Falls is 10 feet.

Today's tides (High tides in Bold)				
Washington	3:41 a.m.	<b>8:51 a.m.</b>	3:38 p.m.	<b>8:59 p.m.</b>
Annapolis	12:24 a.m.	<b>5:24 a.m.</b>	11:39 a.m.	<b>6:35 p.m.</b>
Ocean City	1:47 a.m.	<b>8:19 a.m.</b>	2:43 p.m.	<b>8:33 p.m.</b>
Norfolk	3:47 a.m.	<b>10:15 a.m.</b>	4:37 p.m.	<b>10:34 p.m.</b>
Point Lookout	<b>1:36 a.m.</b>	7:28 a.m.	<b>2:26 p.m.</b>	9:32 p.m.

Today	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Windy, cooler	Partly sunny, breezy	Partly sunny, flurries	Cloudy, windy	Breezy	Snow
<b>51°</b> 33°	<b>43°</b> 31°	<b>42°</b> 27°	<b>35°</b> 24°	<b>39°</b> 27°	<b>36°</b> 26°
FEELS*: 43°	FEELS: 35°	FEELS: 36°	FEELS: 20°	FEELS: 30°	FEELS: 32°
CHNCE PRECIP: 0%	P: 0%	P: 45%	P: 0%	P: 0%	P: 65%
WIND: W 12-25 mph	W: WNW 10-20 mph	W: WSW 6-12 mph	W: NW 12-25 mph	W: WNW 8-16 mph	W: NNW 6-12 mph
HUMIDITY: Moderate	H: Low	H: Moderate	H: Low	H: Low	H: Moderate

### NATION



NATIONAL	Today	Tomorrow	Des Moines	32/24/pc	30/9/sn	Oklahoma City	47/30/pc	52/26/pc	WORLD	Today	Tomorrow
Albany, NY	41/33/sn	37/26/sf	Detroit	36/26/sf	31/25/c	Omaha	35/26/s	31/12/sn	Addis Ababa	73/46/s	74/47/s
Albuquerque	51/29/s	57/30/s	El Paso	66/36/pc	67/36/s	Orlando	73/49/s	69/47/pc	Amsterdam	50/37/r	43/35/sh
Anchorage	18/9/s	13/7/s	Fairbanks, AK	-14/-30/s	-21/-25/s	Philadelphia	49/33/c	40/29/pc	Athens	60/43/s	61/44/pc
Atlanta	53/31/s	52/33/s	Fargo, ND	17/4/c	10/1/pc	Phoenix	73/47/s	75/50/s	Auckland	73/63/sh	73/63/sh
Austin	61/43/s	65/45/pc	Hartford, CT	50/34/sh	40/30/pc	Pittsburgh	38/26/sn	31/26/sf	Baghdad	65/42/pc	66/38/pc
Baltimore	50/31/c	41/27/s	Honolulu	84/71/pc	82/69/pc	Portland, ME	43/33/r	38/25/c	Bangkok	90/66/pc	91/67/s
Billings, MT	27/15/pc	26/16/c	Houston	63/47/s	60/53/sh	Portland, OR	46/43/c	47/43/r	Beijing	43/21/pc	40/14/s
Birmingham	53/29/s	51/34/s	Indianapolis	33/25/c	34/20/pc	Providence, RI	50/34/r	43/27/pc	Berlin	46/39/c	41/30/s
Bismarck, ND	19/2/pc	13/-4/s	Jackson, MS	57/34/s	60/41/s	Raleigh, NC	56/30/s	49/30/s	Bogota	68/48/r	68/48/r
Boise	36/32/sn	43/38/c	Jacksonville, FL	64/38/s	62/35/s	Reno, NV	52/35/c	57/37/c	Brussels	49/38/c	42/33/r
Boston	50/36/r	42/29/pc	Kansas City, MO	40/30/s	39/19/sf	Richmond	55/31/s	47/29/s	Buenos Aires	83/69/t	88/65/s
Buffalo	40/27/sn	30/23/pc	Las Vegas	58/41/pc	63/44/s	Sacramento	55/43/c	59/44/pc	Cairo	68/51/s	69/49/s
Burlington, VT	37/31/sn	33/25/sf	Little Rock	50/32/s	52/33/c	St. Louis	40/28/s	44/22/sn	Caracas	77/63/pc	75/63/sh
Charlotte, SC	61/36/s	56/34/s	Los Angeles	74/49/s	77/53/s	St. Thomas, VI	84/74/pc	84/74/pc	Copenhagen	47/33/sh	38/31/sf
Charlotte, WV	39/28/sf	39/29/pc	Louisville	39/30/c	40/33/s	Salt Lake City	42/36/c	47/36/c	Dakar	81/68/pc	79/67/pc
Charlotte	55/28/s	52/32/s	Memphis	46/32/s	49/34/c	San Diego	66/44/s	68/47/s	Dublin	44/29/pc	38/28/s
Cheyenne, WY	34/19/pc	39/25/c	Miami	80/62/s	78/61/pc	San Francisco	58/49/pc	62/49/pc	Edinburgh	43/26/sn	36/28/s
Chicago	31/21/c	31/16/pc	Milwaukee	33/23/c	31/16/pc	San Juan, PR	85/74/pc	85/73/sh	Frankfurt	43/38/c	42/31/r
Cincinnati	36/26/sf	36/29/c	Minneapolis	22/13/c	19/6/pc	Seattle	46/38/c	46/41/sh	Geneva	47/34/s	47/32/r
Cleveland	37/27/sf	32/25/sf	Nashville	45/28/pc	46/35/pc	Spokane, WA	34/29/sf	34/32/sn	Ham, Bermuda	72/66/pc	68/60/pc
Dallas	54/38/s	61/38/s	New Orleans	60/48/pc	62/52/s	Syracuse	41/31/sf	35/26/sn	Helsinki	32/16/sn	23/18/c
Denver	41/21/pc	44/24/pc	New York City	50/37/c	43/31/pc	Tampa	71/49/s	67/51/pc	Ho Chi Minh City	85/72/c	89/75/t
			Norfolk	56/37/s	46/31/s	Wichita	46/29/pc	48/22/pc	Hong Kong	70/61/c	71/62/pc

# Circulator service comes to an end after two decades

CIRCULATOR FROM B1

came every five minutes — no schedule to study and be disappointed by. The routes were recognizable locations instead of seemingly random numbers. The backs had big windows to make riders feel safer and low floors for easy access. And the fare was a flat dollar.

Circulators were the first buses in D.C. with real-time tracking and bike racks, and the first to drive in a dedicated lane.

“It was supposed to be a demonstration to prove to the city and Metro you could better brand public transportation and get people out of their cars,” Sternlieb said.

Instead, the city expanded Circulator service, without the same supply of attractive, affordable buses. Time between the buses stretched, undermining the reliability that made it attractive in the first place. Meanwhile, Capital Bikeshare and ride-hailing apps had cut into ridership, and Metro-buses became nicer and more reliable. The Circulator’s cost per rider — on some routes as much as \$35 — became “indefensible,” Sternlieb said.

Tangherlini said that rather than mourn the Circulator, transit advocates should think about what would be new and innovative for D.C. in this era.

“What’s the creative experimentation?” he asked. He is optimistic about a long-desired overhaul of the Metrobus network scheduled for next summer: “That’s the exact kind of idea” that was lacking when the Circulator launched.

But up to the last hours, people were still riding. While the Circulator creators gathered, a chef from Reren Lamen in Georgetown was learning his commute would have to change: “Terrible!” said Ashley Bryand Plevelich, whose family takes the Circulator whenever they visit from Philadelphia: “Frustrating!” echoed Wanda Patrick, 64, dropping off some

clothing for charity downtown: “So unfortunate.”

Billy Williams, 69, has figured out a Metrobus route to the Potomac River spot where he goes fishing with his dog Squirrel, but it costs more: “That hurts, especially when you’re on Social Security like I am.”

The driver on the celebratory group ride, 65-year-old Errick Towns, said he doesn’t know what he will do when the service shuts down. “I’m not secure,” he said. He may go to work for Metro, as many other Circulator drivers have, but without the seniority he built up over the past 13 years.

That’s why Gwendetta Mabry, 72, and a 17-year Circulator veteran, says she plans to work for Prince George’s County Public Schools instead. “I don’t want to work nights,” she said.

On the Woodley Park to McPherson Square route Tuesday morning, she said goodbye to one of her favorite regulars — Sammie Whiting-Ellis, who was taking a final Circulator trip to Trader Joe’s.

“The Circulator was a godsend, especially for seniors,” said Whiting-Ellis, 85, who began taking the bus after a bad fall about a decade ago limited her mobility. “It’s really been a blessing, and people who work on it have been so positive and welcoming.”

On the same bus, 63-year-old Jerry Williams said he would miss the service, too. But, he said: “Everything must change. I’m okay with it. The bus is still going to run.” Metrobuses are covering some, but not all, of the former Circulator routes.

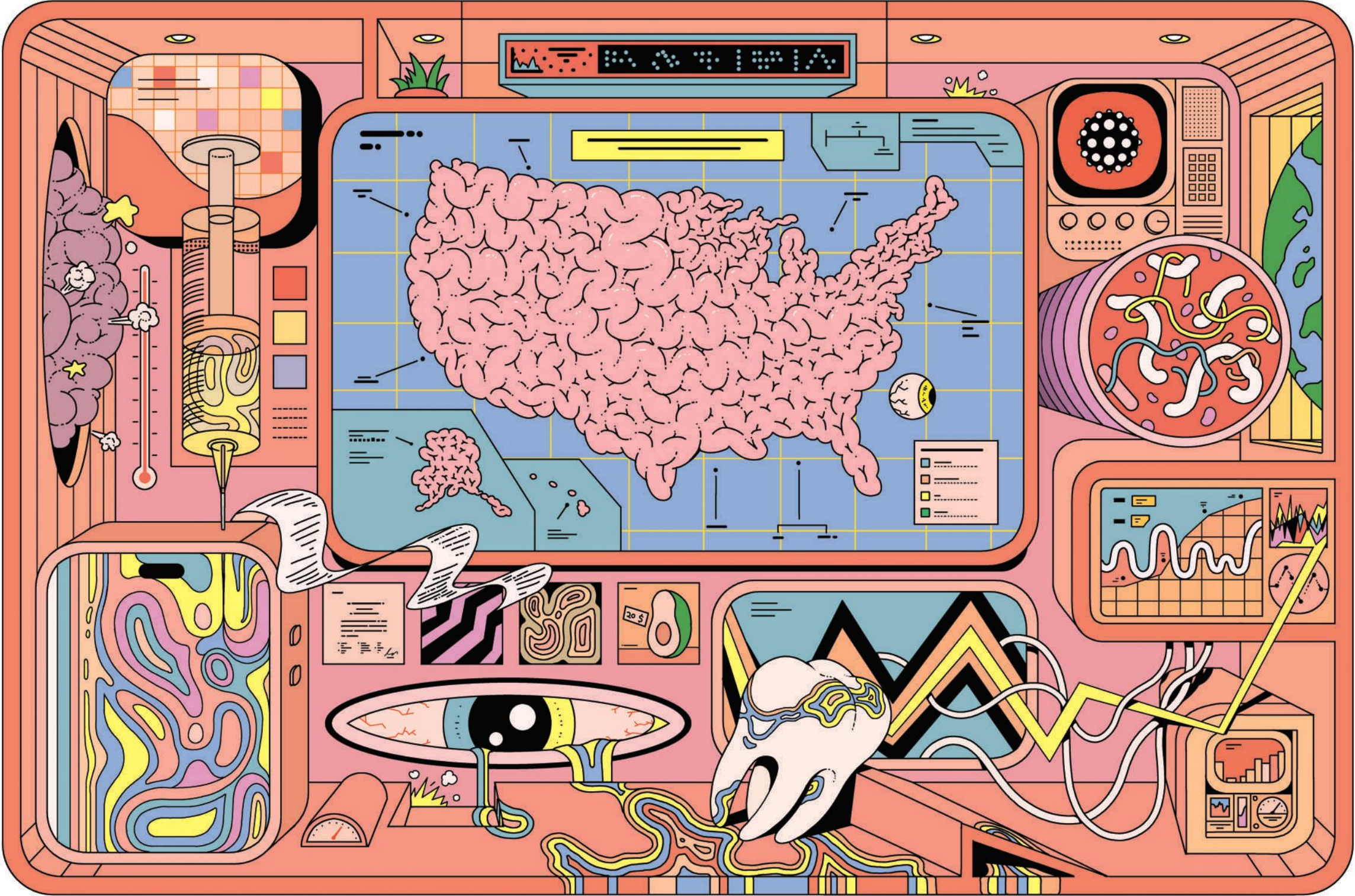
“We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our riders for their support over the past 19 years and appreciate the community’s understanding during this transition,” the city transportation department said in a statement Tuesday. The fleet is being auctioned off; some former Circulator buses are already for sale online; bidding starts at \$5,000.



**TOP:** Sammie Whiting-Ellis, 85, travels on a Circulator bus during its last day in operation to shop at Trader Joe’s. The Circulator initially focused on connecting downtown to popular destinations, including Georgetown, the National Mall and the Southwest Waterfront — and then expanded to other quadrants of the city, becoming a lifeline for older District residents in their everyday lives. **LEFT:** The founding director of the District’s Department of Transportation, Dan Tangherlini, far left, and Joe Sternlieb — head of the Georgetown Business Improvement District — take one last ride on New Year’s Eve. “We were really intentionally trying to create a renaissance in this city,” Sternlieb said. “It was supposed to be a demonstration to prove to the city and Metro you could better brand public transportation and get people out of their cars.”

PHOTOS BY VALERIE PLESCH FOR THE WASHINGTON POST





ILLUSTRATIONS BY ORI TOOR FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

# The List

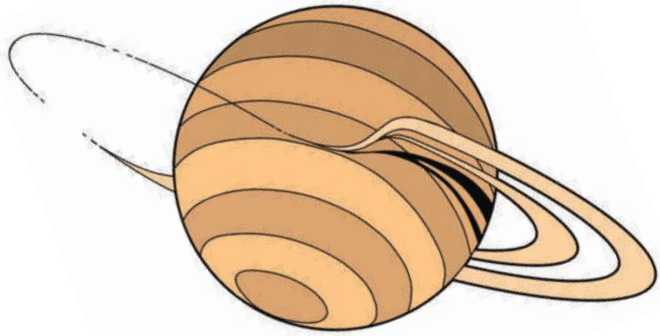
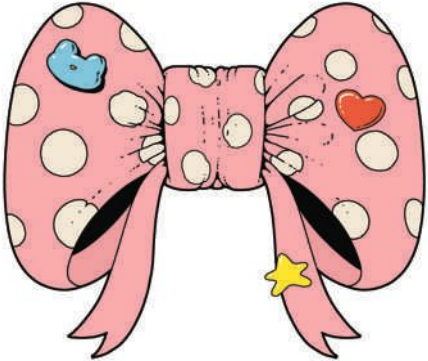
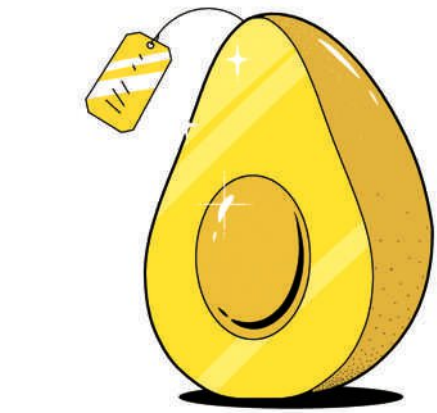
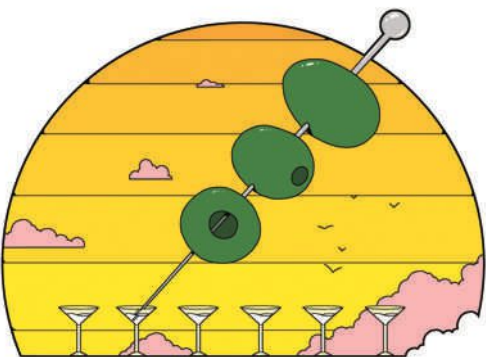
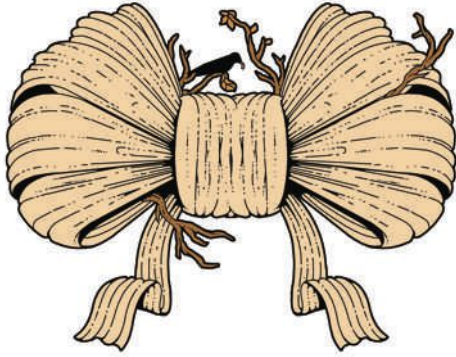
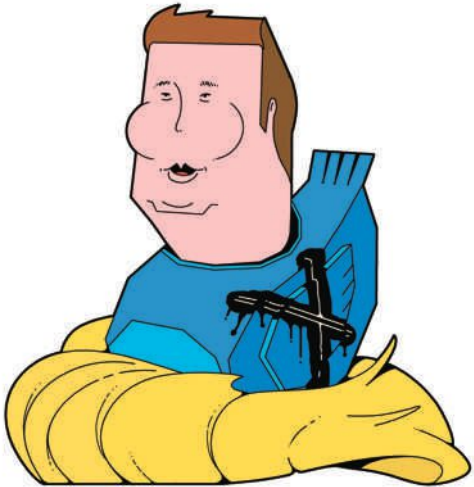
BY MAURA JUDKIS

It's time for your booster shot. Get them now, before the anti-vaxxers are in charge: Listicollis, IN-Outeria (Type B) or Culturasil®. Your insurance probably doesn't cover them — *deny, delay* — but we do. Roll up your left sleeve, please. ¶ Here's a little dose of the cultural pathogens to come in 2025, injected into your media consumption in a manageable dose, to help stimulate your natural defenses. Side effects include brain rot (but don't we all suffer from that, already?) and tooth rot (get your fluoridated water while you can, too). ¶ America had its checkup in November and found out its pulse is racing and its blood pressure is dangerously high. ¶ We prescribe: The List.

## OUT IN

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Friendship bracelets                    | Preemptive pardons                      |
| Nepo babies                             | Nepo in-laws                            |
| Heatless curls                          | Scalp serums                            |
| Moo Deng                                | Bao Li and Qing Bao                     |
| First lady                              | First buddy                             |
| Aesthetics                              | Anesthetics                             |
| Coolcations                             | Extreme day trips                       |
| Parental estrangement                   | The Oasis reunion                       |
| Polycules                               | Polyworking                             |
| Free buses                              | Automated Metro trains                  |
| PS5 Pro                                 | Nintendo Switch 2                       |
| Pasteurized milk                        | Bird flu                                |
| Nat sec acolytes                        | Palm Beach socialites                   |
| Girlies                                 | Crones                                  |
| Jason & Travis Kelce                    | Kylie Kelce                             |
| Boy Scouts                              | Scouting America                        |
| Gummy clusters                          | Swedish gummies                         |
| Yapping                                 | Dissociating                            |
| Fatalism                                | Localism                                |
| Tree pod burials                        | Water cremation                         |
| Juan Soto in the Bronx                  | Juan Soto in Queens                     |
| Elaborate soda                          | Regular coffee                          |
| Cole Escola                             | Betty Gilpin                            |
| Misunderstanding tariffs                | \$20 avocados                           |
| \$3 gas                                 | Fart walks                              |
| Meticulously arranged pantry containers | Purging black plastic kitchenware       |
| Jack Schlossberg                        | Kai Trump                               |
| Severance                               | "Severance"                             |
| Ariana & Cynthia                        | Keke & SZA                              |
| Justin Trudeau                          | Claudia Sheinbaum                       |
| Following                               | Blocking                                |
| RTO                                     | "Voluntary terminations"                |
| Angelina Jolie as Callas                | Anthony Hopkins as Handel               |
| "Talking Talk Tuah"                     | "Talking Talking Talk Tuah"             |
| Saturn returns                          | Saturn's disappearing rings             |
| Bayou weddings                          | Swamp princess                          |
| AI travel influencers                   | Electronic travel authorizations        |
| Grift                                   | Graft                                   |
| Socks and Mary Janes                    | Colorful tights and slingbacks          |
| Zac Posen's Gap                         | Clare Waight Keller's Uniqlo            |
| "Holding space"                         | Colonizing Space                        |
| Ilona Maher on "Dancing With the Stars" | Ilona Maher on the Bristol Bears' pitch |
| "Love Is Blind" matrimony               | "Love Is Blind" unionization            |
| Celebrity look-alike contests           | Celebrity digital replica laws          |
| The mystery drones of New Jersey        | The garbage drones of Mount Everest     |
| Three big martinis                      | Six tiny martinis                       |
| Cause                                   | Effect                                  |
| Benediction                             | Retribution                             |

For links that explain each item on The List, visit the online version at [wapo.st/the-list-2025](https://wapo.st/the-list-2025).





FASHION

# The 2024 shows that changed the conversation

BY RACHEL TASHJIAN

2024 was a lopsided year for fashion. Many of the most familiar names seemed to create little that was interesting and yet somehow dominated conversation, particularly as a global decline in luxury spending — which softened revenue at brands such as Gucci, Louis Vuitton and Salvatore Ferragamo — seemed to fill fashion agnostics and haters with schadenfreude.

But if your bread and butter isn't logos and quiet luxury, there was much to be excited about, as seen in this countdown from the notable to the very best. Women designers became more central to the industry and consumers (Miuccia Prada even appeared on the March cover of *Vogue*). Affordable ready-to-wear clothing, the kind of stuff available at your local mall, became much more interesting. And several designers, many of whose names were less familiar, made clothing that felt truly, compellingly new. Meanwhile, one legendary talent showed the rest of the world how to make a peaceful transition of power — and we're not just talking in the corridors of the garmento business.

Some of these clothes won't have the least influence on our everyday wardrobes, while others could radically reshape them, or at least the way we see or think about beauty and self-expression. In an era when the creative climates of fashion, fine art, filmmaking and fiction can often feel sapped, these collections punched through like a *cri de coeur* for a more energized, more forward-thinking and more expressive world.

## 11. Kiko Kostadinov Spring 2025

This Bulgarian-born, London-based eccentric is one of the few talents who makes clothing to create something new — which is to say, a legitimately novel way of cutting, wearing or putting together fabric.

His Spring 2025 menswear collection, showed in Paris in June, was like a slingshot in the eye of the too numerous creative directors who simply style otherwise uninteresting clothes and call them design: strange but precisely tailored suiting, anoraks and trousers. His work reminds you that to dream of the future once meant optimistic fantasizing about flying cars and putting Mozart records on the moon.

## 10. Tory Burch Fall 2024

Tory Burch has spent the past few years reshaping the company she built, evolving from a preppy behemoth a la Lilly Pulitzer to one of the most refreshing, polished and chic brands in American fashion.

An American woman following her own passions and instincts, she represents a larger, defining trend in culture: that women, at any time in their career, can decide to follow a different path. Her Fall 2024 collection, with poppy dresses inspired by shower caps and lampshades, and ladylike coats that bristled with perversity, cemented her as the maker thinking most astutely about how pulled together, intellectually curious and bold women want to look.

## 9. Simone Rocha Fall 2024

In February, Simone Rocha released the finale collection in a trio that marked the most inventive period of her career thus far. A meditation on Queen Victoria's mourning dress, she teased out the odd and less-discussed realities of public grieving: its glamorization, its sensuality and its drama. Few of us may don black for decades after the passing of a loved one, but trauma has never been more public or performative than it is today — the kind of spiky observation that a real fashion talent's collection will surface.

## 8. Bally Fall 2024

Nearly every successful designer's career today is the product of a careful scheme of marketing and promotion that resembles the manufacturing of pop stars in the early 2000s. But once in a while, a genuine talent bobs to the top all on the strength of what he has to say.

For Simone Bellotti, the creative director of Bally, that is a sweet sort of punk — cowbells, silver studs and spiky heels — that somehow harmonizes with some of the world's most beautifully ladylike (or gentlemanly) leather outerwear, bell-shaped coats and suiting tailored with the gentlest hand. So few things



JONAS GUSTAVSSON FOR THE WASHINGTON POST



HODAKOVA



ESTROP/GETTY IMAGES



DIA DIPASUPIL/GETTY IMAGES

are tender in our world today, and Bally's newish designer is making many of them.

## 7. Alaïa Spring 2025

Pieter Mulier gave one of the year's most powerful statements by staging a genuine fashion show: a sophisticated setting (the spiral hall of the Guggenheim Museum in New York), the world's most beautiful models (Mona Tougaard on the runway,

Paloma Elsesser in the audience) and clothing for the uncompromising, sophisticated and passionate modern woman.

## 6. Martine Rose Fall 2024

Martine Rose is the rare genius who bubbles along as a cult favorite — beloved by the industry's biggest creative kingpins, like Demna of Balenciaga and Jonathan Anderson of Loewe — and has managed to never sell

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The Loewe Spring 2025 show in Paris, held in September. Kiko Kostadinov's Spring 2025 collection showcased his novel work. Da'Vine Joy Randolph at the Met Gala in May, wearing a denim dress designed by Zac Posen for the Gap. Swedish designer Ellen Hodakova Larsson upcycled fur berets into a dress in her Spring 2025 show.**

out. Her somewhat impromptu show in London in January showed the transformative power of her awesomely unusual clothes, which capture the gorgeous arrogance of modern-day dandies who linger outside nightclubs just dying to get in and dance. Her skill in making clothes slightly oversize or slightly shrunken, or taking something like a plaid shirt and turning it

into something swan-y, captures the make-do essence of people who, with little money or power, simply live for style.

## 5. Uniqlo and the Gap

Thank God that the year's best fashion didn't appear only on the runway — there is nothing this world needs more than good, mass-produced ready-to-wear.

Two big boys are attempting just that: Uniqlo, which recently appointed Clare Waight Keller as its first creative director, and the Gap, where Mattel impresario Richard Dickson and former red carpet maestro Zac Posen are plucking the strings. While Posen and Waight Keller have only just begun their tenures, their up-scale sense for quality combined with their seeming dedication to wearable clothes shows big promise for the year to come.

## 4. Hodakova Fall 2024 and Spring 2025

Swedish designer Ellen Hodakova Larsson is a reminder that creativity is at its best not as an alienating force but as a source of delight. Her Fall and Spring shows showed her ingenuity while sculpting berets into woolen and fur jackets, turning trousers upside-down and into miniskirts, twisting boots into tops and argyle sweaters into just about everything. Her clothes, made from deadstock or upcycled pieces, are so inventive and charming that they are luxurious and feel rare and special, reminding us that recycling can be awesomely ingenious. Don't be surprised if the rest of the industry begins following her lead — or trying to, anyways.

## 3. Dries Van Noten Spring 2025 menswear

Dries Van Noten announced his retirement from fashion last year, bringing an end to a highly storied career. He has handled his exit with a level of grace every CEO or political leader should study: He produced an elegant men's collection of greatest hits and simple but modern ideas, his Spring 2025 men's collection, then spent a few quiet months contemplating his successor. More recently, he named the head of his women's studio, Julian Klausner, to the role.

## 2. Maison Margiela Artisanal Spring 2024

The beginning of 2024 felt like a desert — not only in fashion, but across many of the arts. Where were the great, big, ambitious and dangerous ideas?

Here came John Galliano with a couture collection shown in Paris in January that made zoomers and boomers alike feel like they'd time-traveled to the era when fashion shows were like cinema, Renaissance buffets and speakeasy concerts all in one.

The technique of Galliano's clothes suddenly made everything else in fashion, even in couture, look like blah. It may not be an overstatement to say that this collection kick-started the conversation about the decline in intellectual and material quality in fashion, which dominated much of the rest of the year. Galliano, who last year also underwent a valiant re-architecting of his controversial reputation, recently announced his departure from Margiela. Where he's going, no one yet knows. But this show was so overwhelming that he and the brand have continued to milk it into the end of 2024.

## 1. Loewe Spring 2025

Galliano did one show and let that speak for months and months. Anderson, the creative director of Loewe, knows he doesn't have that luxury, and instead spent the year rolling out wildly provocative collections at a breakneck pace. (And in the meantime, did the costumes of Luca Guadagnino's two 2024 films, "Challengers" and "Queer.")

But the best of these collections was the women's show he staged in Paris in September — a rarity, since Anderson's biggest ideas often start in menswear. His tailoring was the perfect look for a woman who wants to command a room (or maybe a whole building), his feathery T-shirts celebrating classical musicians were like merch for the tortured baroque composers department, and his gowns floated on skeletons of fabric like the ghosts of society dresses past.

Rarely does the past — classical musicians, 19th century gowns, leg-of-mutton jackets — look so futuristic, and the collection in its entirety was an unflappable look at our inability to know how to wrestle with history, canonization and nostalgia.



APPRECIATION

# Lavin showcased her wit in her final stage performance

BY NAVEEN KUMAR

If you needed to pay a stranger to call you, you could hardly have done better than a voice like Linda Lavin's. That was the premise of a melancholy comedy in which the six-time Tony nominee, who died Sunday at 87, played a woman who encounters a cryptic ad: "I need to tell you something I'm not ready to tell anyone I know."

Those familiar with Lavin's firm, flinty tone, which could ring curious, wry and withering all in a single word, can imagine her on the other end of such a call. "Is this a sex thing?" her character asked with blunt skepticism (it wasn't) before requesting that the \$20 reward be mailed to a community college where she's taking an acting class. (She wasn't about to tell this random guy her address.) Then, she listened.

Lavin's final theater appearance, in "You Will Get Sick," which premiered off-Broadway in 2022, was a marvelous showcase for the dry candor and sparkling wit that made her a sterling presence on stage and screen for more than 50 years. Known to many for her title role in "Alice," the groundbreaking sitcom in which she played a waitress and single mother, Lavin leaves a legacy in the theater that spans several generations.

She made her Broadway debut in 1962 at age 24 in "A Family

Affair," won a Tony Award in 1987 for Neil Simon's "Broadway Bound" and, more recently, brought formidable life to complex matriarchs in "The Lyons" and "Our Mother's Brief Affair." In total, she appeared in 17 Broadway shows and was a revered regular on smaller stages.

There was humor built into casting a performer as venerable and razor-sharp as Lavin in "You Will Get Sick," by playwright Noah Diaz. Her character, Callan, was a fledgling actor still hesitant to call "this acting thing" her "capital P purpose." She responded to the bizarre ad, placed by a young man played by Daniel K. Isaac, because she needed the cash. Even in her advanced years, she was dreaming big, preparing to audition for a stage production of "The Wizard of Oz" — for the part of Dorothy.

"Great actors can do anything," came Callan's retort to the quip that Dorothy is supposed to be 12. "They can play any age." The surprising hopefulness, however naive, behind Callan's cynical exterior lent an aching dimension to the story: Isaac's unnamed character was suffering from a terminal illness. He could hardly bring himself to talk about his pain, much less imagine the future.

"You Will Get Sick" offered Lavin a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate her singular and precise way of expressing ambiguity. As Callan set a price on

every subsequent favor — breaking the news to his sister, accompanying him to buy a cane — Lavin was 89 percent flatly unsentimental. The magic of her performance was in that other 11 percent. Just because Callan didn't have all day and needed another buck, didn't mean she didn't have a heart. It was evident in the weary sincerity of her questions about his symptoms, in her growing reflex to defend him in conversation and in the gentle upturn of her eyes. She was helping him navigate territory she already recognized: reaching the edge of this world and approaching the next.

The play's exploration of sickness and mortality had a meta-



JOAN MARCUS



BRICH/AP

physical frame. Uncertainty loomed about what came after the inevitable end of life and whose voices lived on afterward in our heads. And there was Lavin, her character hoping to follow in Judy Garland's footsteps, hitting the wrong note in "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," spouting an expletive, then taking a deep breath to start again.

**TOP: Linda Lavin in "You Will Get Sick," by Noah Diaz. LEFT: Lavin poses with Alan Alda after winning a Golden Globe for "Alice" in 1980.**

# A grand master wore jeans to a chess tournament. Controversy followed.

BY DANIEL WU

Magnus Carlsen settled a bizarre feud with chess's international governing body by returning to a major tournament in New York City days after a dispute with officials led him to withdraw abruptly.

The reason the world's top-ranked chess player initially quit? He was penalized for wearing jeans.

In perhaps the most costly opening move of Carlsen's career, the Norwegian grand master arrived for his games in the World Rapid Chess Championship on Friday wearing jeans, which the event's dress code prohibits. The International Chess Federation said in a statement that Carlsen, the defending champion, was issued a \$200 fine and forfeited a round of the tournament when he refused to change. Carlsen said in an interview with a chess app that he then withdrew from both the World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championships, which are held consecutively, as "a matter of principle" and addressed the federation with an expletive.

The theater centering Carlsen, among the most famous of chess celebrities and no stranger to stirring controversy, was enough to kick up a storm among chess enthusiasts, who scrutinized the dress of other competitors at the tournament and argued over how chess should market itself as the

sport continues its startling growth since the coronavirus pandemic.

The hatchet appeared buried Sunday, when the International Chess Federation relented and announced that "elegant minor deviations" to its dress code would be permitted for the remainder of the event. Carlsen then announced he had reversed his decision and was "suiting up" for the blitz tournament that began Monday.

"I am definitely playing in jeans tomorrow," he clarified shortly afterward.

Quitting a tournament to make a point might well be Carlsen's signature gambit. He withdrew from international tournaments in 2008 and 2010 after clashing with the International Chess Federation over the format of top events. The grand master made headlines in 2022 when he pulled out of a tournament after losing a game to American grand master Hans Niemann, whom he later accused of cheating, prompting an investigation and a lawsuit.

But few expected theatrics when the World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championships, an event featuring consecutive tournaments to crown world champions in the two fast-paced formats of chess, began Thursday on Wall Street. Carlsen was the two-time defending champion of both tournaments and was favored to

repeat.

He had started poorly, drawing three games and losing a fourth to lower-ranked competitors on the first day of the Rapid Championship, before his outfit became the talk of the tournament. Officials told Carlsen that the jeans he wore on Friday violated the competition's dress code, which encouraged entrants to "embrace a dress code that reflects the prestige and elegance of this global chess event" and wear "smart business attire."

Officials fined Carlsen \$200 and asked him to change his pants before the next round, according to an International Chess Federation statement. Carlsen later said in an interview with chess app Take Take Take (which he co-founded) that he was in a rush when he arrived at the tournament Friday and hadn't thought anything of his jeans. Carlsen said he offered to change for the next day of competition and was irritated when tournament officials instead demanded he change in the middle of the day.

Carlsen was penalized and forfeited one round of the 13-round competition when he refused to change. He decided to withdraw from the remainder of the rapid tournament and the following blitz tournament after the dispute, he told the chess app.

"They can enforce their rules, that's fine by me, and my re-



JORDAN STRAUSS/INVISION/AP

sponse is that, 'Fine, then I'm out,'" Carlsen said, ending with an expletive.

Carlsen's shock departure prompted plenty of drama. Chess fans on social media lampooned the dress code and questioned whether other competitors were also wearing jeans and had evaded punishment. International Chess Federation CEO Emil Sutovsky defended the decision to penalize Carlsen in an interview with Take Take Take and suggested the defending champion exited in part because of his poor start in the tournament. In another interview, Niemann, the grand master who once feuded

with and sued Carlsen, accused Carlsen of planning the fiasco.

On Sunday, after the rapid tournament crowned new champions, the International Chess Federation appeared to offer an olive branch to Carlsen and said that officials would permit small deviations to the dress code (including, it specified, "appropriate jeans matching the jacket").

"The concerns raised by Magnus Carlsen highlight the need for further discussion about how to modernize the current approach, to ensure that our rules and their application reflect the evolving nature of chess as a global and accessible sport," the

**Norwegian chess grand master Magnus Carlsen, seen in 2023.**

federation's president, Arkady Dvorkovich, said in a statement.

Chess is continuing to experience a renaissance sparked by the pandemic and the popularity of the Netflix series "The Queen's Gambit." Questions over how to further boost its appeal and accessibility with new fans have embroiled both Carlsen and the federation he has clashed with. Carlsen is pushing a media-friendly competitive chess league, the Freestyle Chess Grand Slam Tour, that will feature a new rule — randomized starting positions for kings, queens, bishops, knights and rooks — and heart-rate monitors for competitors, the Financial Times reported. The proposal prompted a dispute with the International Chess Federation, which maintains that only it can host a world championship contest.

On Monday, Carlsen returned to the World Blitz Championship wearing jeans. That evening, he faced Niemann and, after wordlessly exchanging handshakes, battled him to a draw.

# I'm losing my patience with these 'overly nice' people. What do I do?



Carolyn Hax

**Dear Carolyn:** I seem to get annoyed with overly nice people. For example, one co-worker goes out of their way to be nice to everyone, trying to be a best friend to subordinates, but when they try to exercise their authority, they are not respected. I have explained to this manager that they cannot treat everyone at work like their best friend. They get frustrated and agree with me, but they just continue and get burned every time.

Another example: a family member who compliments EVERYONE. "Your fragrance is wonderful," "I love your hair," "You're so beautiful": No one is safe from these over-the-top compliments. Everything is

"wonderful." Then she uses this introduction to find out every detail about you and your life.

I recently went through a rough patch. She asks me how I'm doing. I know eventually everything will be okay, but my feelings right now are anxiousness and sadness. But she hears only what she wants, which is the rosy comment, and says: "Thank the Lord!" ... And conversation is done. She talks constantly; you cannot get a word in edgewise.

I just don't want to be annoyed by these people, and I want to accept their positivity. Is there such a thing as too nice?

— *Annoyed*

**Annoyed:** You're annoyed because these people are annoying.

They also aren't "nice."

Well, they may be, perfectly so.



ILLUSTRATION BY NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

I don't know their intentions.

But the trait in each that you find so annoying isn't kindness. Both, in different ways, have a problem with boundaries. Your colleague feels too beholden to

others, letting them trample all over, accommodating their every signal to the point of self-erasure.

Your relative is unresponsive to others, trampling all over them and their signals to

the point of erasing all selves present but her own.

This has been an interesting exercise, thank you.

But the annoyance isn't about them or "nice," is it? Presumably, you were moved to write because you feel more than a normal, passing irritation with people, instead finding yourself mired repeatedly in others' dysfunction. Or at least you're questioning your own judgment about what constitutes "nice," because these social behaviors you were taught to value — best friend to everyone, everything is wonderful!!! — are what you now dissonantly link with discomfort.

I'll make two suggestions. The first is to look past the fripperies of the words people use to interact and note the underlying structure. Is the other person self-aware, and aware of you? Is there room for mutual goals in your exchange? Do ideas, information and concern run both ways? If that underlying structure is there, then that is respect — and \*that\* is "nice." Even if the words maybe have more grit in them than you're used to.

If the respect foundation isn't there, then that's just self-

interest with flowers in it. Annoying indeed.

Second suggestion is "Lifeskills for Adult Children" by Janet Woititz and Alan Garner, which I mention mostly in my live chats. It's slim and extremely basic, the ABCs of not getting cornered by Aunt Edgewise for people who were taught to feel guilty for walking away.

This work will help you see it is not reasonable, for example, to expect this manager to absorb your management advice on the 11th try because today! the clouds part.

And it is not reasonable to expect this relative to take your hands in hers and say, "I'm glad to hear you're better, but I also hear sadness — and I'm here for you."

*They won't read these situations* — but your annoyance will ease if you learn to. Good luck.

Write to Carolyn Hax at [tellme@washpost.com](mailto:tellme@washpost.com). Get her column delivered to your inbox each morning at [wapo.st/gethax](http://wapo.st/gethax).

Join the discussion live at noon Fridays at [washingtonpost.com/live-chats](http://washingtonpost.com/live-chats).



TELEVISION

1/1/25	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
4.1 WRC (NBC)	• <b>NBCNe..</b>	• FoodFare	• Chicago Med		• Chicago Fire		• Chicago P.D.		• <b>News</b>
4.2 WRC (IND)	Married	Married	King	King	King	King	Frasier	Frasier	Frasier
5.1 WTTG (Fox)	• Fox 5	• <b>TMZ</b>	• The Real Full Monty				• <b>Fox 5 at 10</b>		• <b>News</b>
7.1 WJLA (ABC)	• <b>Wheel</b>	• <b>Jeopardy!</b>	• <b>2024 Rock &amp; Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony</b>						
9.1 WUSA (CBS)	• InsideEd.	• <b>ET</b>	• NCIS: Origins		• NCIS: Origins		• NCIS: Origins		• <b>9 News</b>
14.1 WFDC (UNI)	• Rosa		• <b>Fugitivas</b>		• <b>Juana</b>		• <b>El precio</b>		• Noticias
20.1 WDCA (MNTV)	• FamFeud	• FamFeud	• New Year	• Fox 5	• <b>TrueCri..</b>	• Crime	• FamFeud	• FamFeud	• Dateline
22.1 WMPT (PBS)	• Milk	• MotorW..	• <b>Great Performances</b>			• Il Volo-Valley			• Brit Floyd
26.1 WETA (PBS)	• <b>PBS News Hour</b>		• <b>Great Performances</b>			• Great Performances			• <b>Amanp..</b>
32.1 WHUT (PBS)	• Big Pacific		• Chic-Rodgers			• Love Train			• Billy Joel
50.1 WDCW (CW)	• BobHeart	• BobHeart	• Penn & Teller		• Whose	• Whose	• <b>DC News Now</b>		• Neighb
66.1 WPXW (ION)	• Blue Bloods		• Blue Bloods		• Blue Bloods		• Blue Bloods		• BlueBlo..
A&E	The First 48		The First 48		<b>The First 48</b>		Homicide (P)		First48
AMC	(6:15) Movie: Rocky III (1982) ★★★			(:45) Movie: Rocky IV ★★ (1985)				(:45) Movie: Rocky V ★ (1990)	
Animal Planet	Dogs 101		River Monsters		River Monsters		River Monsters		Monsters
BET	Tyler Perry's Sistas		Tyler Perry's Sistas		Tyler Perry's Sistas		Diarra From Detroit		Sistas
Bravo	Movie: Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2 ★★★ (2011) Harry may have to make the ultimate sacrifice.						Movie: Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1 (2010)		
Cartoon Network	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy
CNN	The Eighties		<b>Luther: Never Too Much</b>				The Nineties		Luther
Comedy Central	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Family Guy
Discovery	Expedition Unknown		Expedition Unknown		<b>Expedition Unknown</b>		<b>Blind Frog Ran</b>		Expedition
Disney	(:10) Movie: Luca (2021) (P)		(:50) StuGo		(:05) Kiff	Kiff	Kiff	Kiff	StuGo
E!	<b>Girls Gone Wild</b>		(:15) <b>Girls Gone Wild</b>		(:35) <b>Girls Gone Wild</b>		Girls Gone		
ESPN	(5:10) <b>Playoff QF Rose State vs. Oregon</b> (Live)		(:50) <b>Playoff Quarterfinal at the Allstate Sugar Bowl</b> Notre Dame vs. Georgia (Live)						
ESPN2	(5:00) <b>Playoff QF Rose Bowl</b>		(:20) <b>Postgame</b>		(:40) <b>Ki..</b> / (:50) <b>Playoff Quarterfinal at the Allstate Sugar Bowl</b> Command Center: Notre Dame vs. Georgia (Live)				
Food Network	<b>Tournament</b>		Tournament		Bobby's Triple Threat		Bobby's Triple Threat		Bobby's
Fox News	<b>Ingraham</b> (Live)		<b>Jesse Watters</b> (Live)		<b>Hannity</b> (Live)		<b>Gutfeld!</b>		Bret Baier
Freeform	(5:45) Movie: The Incredibles (2004)		(:20) Movie: Incredibles 2 ★★★ (2018) Elastigirl battles a mad cybercriminal called Screenslaver.						
FX	(4:30) Movie: Pirates of the Caribbean: At Wo...		Movie: Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides ★★ (2011) Capt. Jack Sparrow searches for the Fountain of Youth.				Movie: Jurassic...		
Hallmark	(6:00) Movie: Christmas Under the Stars (2019)		Movie: The Christmas Note (2015) Gretchen and Melissa uncover a huge surprise.				Movie: The Christmas Secret (2014)		
Hallmark M&M	The Way Home		The Way Home		The Way Home		The Way Home		The Way Home
HBO	(6:10) Movie: Civil War ★★★ (2024)		Movie: Dune: Part Two ★★★ (2024) Paul Atreides unites with Chani and the Fremen.				(:50) Movie: Beetlejuice Beetlejuice (2024)		
HGTV	Hunters	Hunters	<b>HGTV Dream</b>		Bahamas	Bahamas	<b>Hunters</b>	<b>Hunters</b>	Hunters
History	American Pickers		American Pickers		<b>American Pickers</b>		(:05) Pickers	Pickers	
Lifetime	(5:00) Movie: Hidden Figures ★★★ (2016)		Movie: Fifty Shades of Grey ★★ (2015)				(:05) Movie: He's Not Worth Dying For (2022)		
MASN	Bensinger		Nationals Classics 2024: Nationals at Dodgers				Wager	<b>Pro Football Plus</b>	
Monumental	<b>Basketball</b> Chicago Bulls at Washington Wizards (Live)					<b>Postgame</b> (Live)		NBA Basketball	
MSNBC	The ReidOut		All In With		Alex Wagner Tonight		Last Word		11th Hour
MTV	(6:30) The Challenge		<b>The Challenge</b>			Ridiculous		Ridiculous	Ridiculous
Nat'l Geographic	To Catch a Smuggler		To Catch a Smuggler		To Catch a Smuggler		To Catch a Smuggler		
Nickelodeon	<b>Max</b>	<b>Slimetime</b>	Mod Fam	Mod Fam	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends
NWSN	<b>On Balance</b> (Live)		Cuomo		George Will		<b>Banfield</b> (Live)		Cuomo
Paramount	(6:35) Yellowst.	(:45) Yellowstone		(:45) Yellowstone		(:55) Yellowstone			
Paramount+Sho	(6:30) Movie: Face/Off ★★★ (1997)				Movie: Drive Angry ★★ (2011) (P)		(:45) Movie: Pig ★★★ (2021)		
Syfy	(:05) Twi. Zone	Twilight Zone	(:55) Twi.Zone..	(:45) Twi. Zone	(:10) Twi. Zone	(:35) Twi. Zone	Twilight Zone	(:25) Twi.Zone..	(:15) Twi. Zone
TBS	(5:30) Movie: Doctor ...		<b>All Elite Wrestling: Dynamite</b> (Live)				Mod Fam	Mod Fam	Mod Fam
TCM	(5:45) Movie: Shine a Light ★★★ (2008)		Movie: That's Entertainment! ★★★ (1974) Clips from 1928-58 MGM musicals.						
TLC	(6:00) <b>My 600-Lb. Life</b>		<b>My 600-Lb. Life</b>				Too Large		Too Large
TNT	(4:45) Movie: Star Wars: Last Jedi (2017)		Movie: Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker ★★ (2019) Rey and her allies battle Kylo Ren and the First Order.						
Travel	Paranormal Cam.		Paranormal Cam.		Paranormal Cam.		Paranormal Cam.		Paranor..
truTV	NHL on TNT Face Off		NHL Hockey St. Louis Blues at Chicago Blackhawks						
TV Land	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	King
TV One	Fatal Attraction		Fatal Attraction		Fatal Attraction		Fatal Attraction		Attraction
USA Network	Law & Order: SVU		Law & Order: SVU		Law & Order: SVU		Law & Order: SVU		Law-SVU
VH1	(6:00) Movie: Candym...		Movie: It ★★★ (2017) (P)						
WNC8	Joint Relief Secrets		TBA	Paid Prog.	<b>SportsTalk</b>	TBA	<b>WJLANe..</b>	Paid Prog.	<b>National</b>
<b>LEGEND:</b> Bold indicates new or live programs ♦ High Definition									
Movie Ratings (from TMS) ★★★ Excellent ★★ Good ★★ Fair ★ Poor No stars: not rated									

HOROSCOPE



**BIRTHDAY | JANUARY 1:** You are determined and hardworking; however, you are also flexible and can handle change. You're intelligent. This year will be slower paced. Your primary focus will be on relationships. Concentrate on your needs and what brings you happiness. Choose people who have your back.

**Moon Alert:** After 6 a.m. today there are no restrictions to shopping or important decisions. The Moon is in Aquarius.

**ARIES** (MARCH 21-APRIL 19). Tread carefully to avoid power struggles with friends, members of groups and your kids, including romantic relationships, because people are stubborn and intense today! Meanwhile, postpone New Year's resolutions until Feb. 23. Wait until Mars retrograde is over.

**TAURUS** (APRIL 20-MAY 20). Ego battles with authority figures – parents, bosses, supervisors, teachers and the police – are classic today. Avoid these if possible, because there's no winning. Fortunately, relations with friends are excellent. Travel plans still look exciting. Go with what works; avoid anything nasty.

**GEMINI** (MAY 21-JUNE 20). Pay attention to everything you say and do, because this is an accident-prone day for you. An accident doesn't have to happen, but feelings are intense, and a quarrel might happen and distract you. Meanwhile, New Year's resolutions won't be realistic until after Feb. 23.

**CANCER** (JUNE 21-JULY 22). Skirmishes about financial matters or

something that you own or something that you owe to someone else might arise today. However, this is a poor day for financial negotiations, because people are pushy and too excitable. Postpone these discussions for another day. Stay chill.

**LEO** (JULY 23-AUG. 22). This is a dicey day for you. Mars is retrograde in your sign until Feb. 23, which can suck the energy out of you. It also creates some challenges. Meanwhile, today the Moon is lined up with Pluto opposite your sign! Avoid conflict with others. Definitely. Pamper yourself in nice ways.

**VIRGO** (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22). You might be hellbent on making improvements to your job or your health today in a way that's a bit obsessed. However, be aware that New Year's resolutions won't have validity until after Feb. 23. Wait until then to get serious about your new list.

**LIBRA** (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22). Be patient with romantic partners and your kids, because there's a lot of tension flying around out there. Don't fuel any of this conflict. It will only make you and others miserable. Be charming. Be patient. Be tolerant. Interactions at work are great.

**SCORPIO** (OCT. 23-NOV. 21). Conflict at home might take place today, because people want to get their own way, especially if they want to make improvements. No doubt parents or authority figures have different views on things. Ironically, social outings and fun activities with kids and sports will delight you.

**SAGITTARIUS** (NOV. 22-DEC. 21). This is the classic day for arguments and disputes that are really meaningless, but you can avoid these. For starters, don't take the bait. Power struggles are likely, but this is generally just people flexing their egos. Instead, entertain at home or enjoy tweaking your digs.

**CAPRICORN** (DEC. 22-JAN. 19). Conflict about money and possessions or debt and loans might arise today. These exchanges could be intense and nasty! Don't even go there. Fortunately, your ability to schmooze with others today is excellent. Sidestep these talks and focus on something else. Enjoy your day!

**AQUARIUS** (JAN. 20-FEB. 18). Today the Moon is in your sign lined up with Pluto opposing fiery Mars. This ain't easy. It can trigger conflict with spouses, partners and close friends. Instead, relate to younger people. Focus on money. Sometimes, when the going gets tough, the tough go shopping. (You might buy art or pretty things.)

**PISCES** (FEB. 19-MARCH 20). Fortunately, this is a popular time for you. Discussions with parents and bosses are favorable. This is good, because disputes related to your job, your health or possibly a pet could be intense or disturbing. But you can avoid these if you choose not to get involved. Venus in your sign makes you charming!

— Georgia Nicols

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SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆								

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9	6	7	5	2	4	1	3	8
5	8	4	1	9	3	6	2	7
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1	9	6	8	7	5	2	4	3
4	7	8	3	1	2	5	6	9
3	5	2	6	4	9	8	7	1
7	1	5	4	3	6	9	8	2
8	4	9	2	5	7	3	1	6
6	2	3	9	8	1	7	5	4

# SCRABBLE GRAMS

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A<sub>1</sub>

E<sub>1</sub>

O<sub>1</sub>

G<sub>2</sub>

X<sub>8</sub>

N<sub>1</sub>

H<sub>4</sub>

Double Word Score

RACK 1

O<sub>1</sub>

O<sub>1</sub>

U<sub>1</sub>

G<sub>2</sub>

R<sub>1</sub>

T<sub>1</sub>

F<sub>4</sub>

RACK 2

E<sub>1</sub>

E<sub>1</sub>

E<sub>1</sub>

J<sub>8</sub>

L<sub>1</sub>

W<sub>4</sub>

B<sub>3</sub>

3rd Letter Triple

RACK 3

E<sub>1</sub>

E<sub>1</sub>

M<sub>3</sub>

L<sub>1</sub>

N<sub>1</sub>

C<sub>3</sub>

T<sub>1</sub>

RACK 4

PAR SCORE 165-175

BEST SCORE 242

FOUR RACK TOTAL

TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. Finally, 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All the words are in the Official SCRABBLE® Players Dictionary, 5th Edition. SOLUTION TOMORROW

For more information on tournaments and clubs, email NASPA - North American SCRABBLE Players Association info@scrabbleplayers.org. Visit our website - www.scrabbleplayers.org. For puzzle inquiries contact scgramsg@gmail.com

01-01

PREVIOUS SCRABBLEGRAMS SOLUTION

J <sub>8</sub>	O <sub>1</sub>	C <sub>3</sub>	K <sub>5</sub>	I <sub>1</sub>	S <sub>1</sub>	H <sub>4</sub>	RACK 1 =	119
U <sub>1</sub>	S <sub>1</sub>	E <sub>1</sub>	L <sub>1</sub>	E <sub>1</sub>	S <sub>1</sub>	S <sub>1</sub>	RACK 2 =	57
F <sub>4</sub>	I <sub>1</sub>	N <sub>1</sub>	I <sub>1</sub>	T <sub>1</sub>	E <sub>1</sub>		RACK 3 =	9
K <sub>5</sub>	I <sub>1</sub>	M <sub>3</sub>	O <sub>1</sub>	N <sub>1</sub>	O <sub>1</sub>	S <sub>1</sub>	RACK 4 =	68
PAR SCORE 145-155							TOTAL	253

ACROSS

- 1 "Hurry!" letters
- 5 Post-marathon feelings
- 10 88 Earth days on Mercury
- 14 Ricky Martin's "Livin' la Vida "
- 15 Where the heart is
- 16 Like a literary duckling
- 17 Gelcap, e.g.
- 18 Rodeo rope
- 19 Spy
- 20 \*Occasion to stay up late
- 23 Anna's "Frozen" sister
- 24 Cry of pain
- 27 Protein source in Greek salad
- 29 \*Hard wear with links
- 34 "My gosh, you're right!"
- 36 Acr. from
- 37 Mrs. in Mexico
- 38 \*Team whose stadium is at the highest elevation in the majors

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17					18						19			
20				21						22				
			23							24		25	26	
	27	28				29	30	31	32					33
34					35		36					37		
38						39				40	41			
42					43				44					
45				46	47				48		49			
	50							51	52					
			53		54	55	56					57	58	59
60	61	62			63						64			
65					66						67			
68					69						70			







MUTTS

PATRICK McDONNELL

ZITS

JERRY SCOTT & JIM BORGMAN

HEART OF THE CITY

STEENZ

JUDGE PARKER

FRANCESCO MARCIULIANO & MIKE MANLEY

FRAZZ

JEFF MALLETT

CANDORVILLE

DARRIN BELL

GARFIELD

JIM DAVIS

BARNEY AND CLYDE

WEINGARTENS & CLARK

DUSTIN

STEVE KELLEY & JEFF PARKER

FLASH GORDON

DAN SCHKADE

PRICKLY CITY

SCOTT STANTIS

LOOSE PARTS

DAVE BLAZEK

NON SEQUITUR

WILEY

BABY BLUES

RICK KIRKMAN & JERRY SCOTT

BIG NATE

LINCOLN PEIRCE

SPEED BUMP

DAVE COVERLY

DENNIS THE MENACE

H. KETCHAM

ON THE FASTTRACK

BILL HOLBROOK

FAMILY CIRCUS

BIL KEANE

REPLY ALL LITE

DONNA A. LEWIS

BEETLE BAILEY

GREG, BRIAN & NEAL WALKER

REPLY ALL LITE

DONNA A. LEWIS



## In age of the transfer portal, QB depth has taken a big hit

Stockton's ascension to starter at Georgia puts focus on growing issue

BY JESSE DOUGHERTY

NEW ORLEANS — Squinting, smiling, talking not far above a whisper, Gunner Stockton answered questions for exactly one hour Monday morning, an eternity when you're shy and don't have a ton to say. But when you're about 48 hours from starting for Georgia in the Sugar Bowl — and when that game, a College Football Playoff quarterfinal, will be your first college start — reporters become curious.

They ask about your 14 cows, the ones you got for Christmas in

high school, and whether they have names (they don't).

They ask whether your hometown, Tiger, Georgia, is similar to how it's depicted in the movie "Deliverance."

"Scenery-wise? Yes," Stockton said, still squinting into the bright camera lights. "People? No."

And they ask, naturally, whether you have talked with Carson Beck, the injured Georgia starter who is now headed for the NFL draft. A phone call, Stockton confirmed, after it was clear Beck would miss the rest of the season. In the SEC championship game, on the last play of the first half, Beck's throwing elbow bent the wrong way, tearing a ligament. Enter Stockton, a former five-star recruit, who has the same number of touchdown passes as

SEE QUARTERBACK ON D3



ROSS D. FRANKLIN/ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Penn State tight end Tyler Warren was a thorn in Boise State's side, hauling in his second touchdown pass over safety Ty Benefield.**

**College Football Playoff: Quarterfinals**  
**Fiesta Bowl:** 6 Penn State 31, 3 Boise State 14  
**Peach Bowl:** 4 Arizona State vs. 5 Texas, 1 p.m., ESPN  
**Rose Bowl:** 1 Oregon vs. 8 Ohio State, 5 p.m., ESPN  
**Sugar Bowl:** 2 Georgia vs. 7 Notre Dame, 8:45 p.m., ESPN

## Nittany Lions flip Fiesta Bowl on its head and roar into semis



Candace Buckner

GLENDAL, ARIZ. — Penn State was supposed to be taking its time. Just winding down the clock Tuesday night and playing as conservative as possible to put the Fiesta Bowl safely to sleep. No need for fireworks and fancy champagne when you're leading by two scores in the final quarter against the third-seeded Boise State Broncos. Just keep it grounded and run out the ... oh, never mind. This being New Year's Eve, the Nittany Lions wanted a party on their way to a 31-14 victory.

What seemed to be a fitting end to a Fiesta Bowl flipped upside down — No. 6 seed Penn State controlling the game with the run and showing one of the

best rushing teams how to do it — instead concluded with running back Nicholas Singleton breaking free, pumping his right arm down the field for the 58-yard touchdown with 4:54 remaining. The long touchdown run punctuated Penn State's night on the ground for 216 yards before the final kneel down and widened the gap between the Nittany Lions' rushing attack in contrast to the Broncos and the best running back in college football.

If the appeal of this game was a prime-time matchup between the second coming of Barry Sanders vs. the next Micah Parsons, then that storyline fizzled by the first half. Boise State running back Ashton Jeanty and his pursuit of history remained bottled up through three quarters. Jeanty

SEE BUCKNER ON D5

## 'I'm a dog': Champagnie crashes glass, finds a role

Forward flourishing in Wizards' rotation on a two-way contract

BY VARUN SHANKAR

Justin Champagnie first heard the call when he was around 7 years old playing AAU basketball. It came from his mother, Christina, and the mother of one of his teammates.

"Crash the glass!" they shouted. "Crash the glass! Crash the glass!" Champagnie listened. Its echoes still reverberate. The 23-year-old has made offensive rebounding the linchpin of his game with the Washington Wizards.

Since going undrafted out of Pittsburgh in 2021, Champagnie had struggled to carve out a full-time NBA role. He signed with the Wizards in February on a 10-day contract, then agreed to a two-way deal in March that allows him to move between Washington and its G League affiliate, the Capital City Go-Go. He started this season on the periphery of the NBA and outside Coach Brian Keefe's rotation.

But injuries unearthed an opportunity, and Champagnie took advantage. He has started 10 straight games, beginning with a 23-point scoring outburst in the Dec. 7 victory over the Denver Nuggets that busted a 16-game losing streak.

Champagnie is averaging 12.8 points and 8.4 rebounds over that stretch, shooting 54.8 percent from the field and 38.6 percent from three. He scored a career-high 31 points in Washington's overtime loss to the New York Knicks on Saturday.

Inch for inch, there are few better than the 6-foot-6 Champagnie on the offensive glass. The analytics site Cleaning the Glass ranks his offensive rebounding rate (the percentage of his team's missed shots that he rebounds) in the 96th percentile among forwards. Since he entered the starting lineup, Champagnie is second among non-centers in offensive rebounds per game.

It's a punishing task he embraces.

"I feel like a lot of guys don't want to crash the glass or don't want to guard someone who is willingly throwing their body on

SEE WIZARDS ON D2

### Bulls at Wizards

7 p.m., Monumental



JOHN MCDONNELL/ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Forward Justin Champagnie (9) has started in his last 10 games.**



JOHN MCDONNELL FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**CAPITALS 3, BRUINS 1:** Defenseman Jakob Chychrun, center, revels Tuesday in his first-period goal, his 11th of the season, with John Carlson and Alex Ovechkin.

# Embracing the grind

*Stanley Cup run? Gretzky's record for career goals? Why choose?*



Barry Svrluga

As 2025 arrives, there are two essential threads to every Washington Capitals game: Did they win? Did Ovi score?

The answers in Tuesday's New Year's Eve matinee against the Boston Bruins at Capital One Arena: yes and no.

The former is more important for this unexpectedly interesting and promising season. The latter is more important for a developing (inter)national story.

The tallies for each: With a grinding 3-1 victory over the

hardened-and-heavy (but struggling) Bruins, the Caps have 25 wins in 37 games, more than any team in the NHL's Eastern Conference. And Alex Ovechkin — in his first game on home ice since Nov. 13, five days before he went out with a broken bone in his leg — is stuck on 17 goals for the season and 870 for his career.

We say "stuck on 17 goals." It's a ridiculous notion. He's 39, and he has those 17 goals in all of 21 games — a 66-goal pace over the course of 82 games. He won't play a full allotment this year because the leg injury cost him 16 games already. But even after failing to get one of his seven

SEE SVRLUGA ON D3

*The Capitals end the calendar year by gutting out another ugly win*

BY BAILEY JOHNSON

The Washington Capitals are developing a knack for winning ugly.

Tuesday's game against the Boston Bruins at Capital One Arena — Washington's final game of a three-in-four stretch to end the calendar year — wasn't a master class, by any definition. It was a one-goal game until winger Aliaksei Protas hit the empty net with nine seconds left, and the Capitals were never in total control throughout the afternoon.

But they came away with a 3-1 win over the Bruins anyway, fueled by two goals from Protas — his 15th and 16th of the season —

and a 26-save performance from Logan Thompson in net. Jeremy Swayman made 24 saves for Boston (20-15-4).

"I thought Swayman was good as well, but I thought LT was really good," Washington Coach Spencer Carbery said. "I thought us just grinding our way through, even though we're — like, we're struggling. We're struggling right now with our game. We're trying to work our way through some things. ... As frustrating as it can be at times, our guys, they want to win desperately, and they just grinded their way through that."

The first 10 minutes weren't pretty for the Capitals (25-10-2).

SEE CAPITALS ON D3

**Wild at Capitals:** Thursday, 7 p.m., Monumental

### COLLEGES

The Dartmouth men's basketball team withdraws its bid to unionize, leading the NLRB to close the case. **D2**

### PRO FOOTBALL

The Cowboys release Ezekiel Elliott, giving the veteran running back a chance to land with a playoff team. **D4**

### PRO FOOTBALL

Mark Maske wades into the debate on whether the NFL should seed playoff teams based solely on records. **D4**



# THE DAY IN SPORTS

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

### Wolverines top Tide in the ReliaQuest Bowl

Michigan's defense sacked **Jalen Milroe** five times and forced three turnovers by the Alabama quarterback to lead the Wolverines to a 19-13 victory over the Crimson Tide, which is No. 11 in the College Football Playoff rankings, in the ReliaQuest Bowl in Tampa.

**Dominic Zvada** kicked four field goals and **Davis Warren** threw a first-half touchdown pass to **Fredrick Moore** for Michigan (8-5), which finished the season on a three-game winning streak that included back-to-back upsets of rival Ohio State and Alabama (9-4). ...

**Josh McCray** scored his second touchdown of the game on a nine-yard run midway through the fourth quarter to give No. 20 Illinois the lead, and the Illini held on to beat No. 15 South Carolina, 21-17, in the Citrus Bowl in Orlando. ...

**Harrison Bailey** threw for three touchdowns and **Caullin Lacy** scored twice as Louisville hung on to beat Washington, 35-34, in the Sun Bowl in El Paso. ...

**Garrett Nussmeier** threw for 304 yards and three touchdowns as LSU beat Baylor, 44-31, in the Texas Bowl in Houston.

## PRO BASKETBALL

### Thompson and Rozier suspended for scuffle

The NBA suspended Houston's **Amen Thompson** for two games and Miami's **Terry Rozier** for one game over their roles in a skirmish in the final moments of the Rockets-Heat game Sunday.

The league also handed out \$145,000 in fines from that game. Houston Coach **Ime Udoka** was fined \$50,000 for verbally abusing a game official and not leaving the court in a timely manner, while the Rockets' **Jalen Green** was fined \$35,000 and the Heat's **Tyler Herro** was fined \$25,000 for their roles in the fight.

From a separate incident just before the dustup, Houston's **Fred VanVleet** was fined \$35,000 for making contact with referee **Marc Davis**. ...

**Jayson Tatum** scored 18 of his 23 points in Boston's dominant third quarter, and the Celtics routed visiting Toronto, 125-71, extending the Raptors' losing streak to 11 games. ...

**Victor Wembanyama** closed out a historic month with 27 points, nine rebounds, five assists and three blocks in 26 minutes, and the San Antonio Spurs rolled to a 122-86 home victory over the Los Angeles Clippers. ...

**Giannis Antetokounmpo** shook off a four-point first half and finished with 30 points and 12 rebounds as the Milwaukee Bucks rallied from a 19-point deficit and beat the Indiana Pacers, 120-112, in Indianapolis.

## HOCKEY

### Fowler, Blues prevail in the Winter Classic

**Cam Fowler** scored twice in his 1,000th NHL game as the St. Louis Blues beat the Chicago Blackhawks, 6-2, in the Winter Classic at Chicago's Wrigley Field.

**Justin Faulk** had a goal and two assists as St. Louis won for the third time in four games.

**Jordan Kyrou**, **Dylan Holloway** and **Alexandre Texier** also scored. ...

**David Kampf**, **Steven Lorentz** and **John Tavares** scored as the Toronto Maple Leafs beat the New York Islanders, 3-1, at home to move into a tie with the idle Florida Panthers for the top spot in the Atlantic Division. ...

**Kirby Dach** scored midway through the third period to cap a Montreal Canadiens rally and help end the Vegas Golden

Knights' six-game winning streak with a 3-2 victory in Las Vegas.

**COLLEGE BASKETBALL**

**Cavaliers rally at home to defeat the Wolfpack**

**Elijah Saunders** scored 22 points, **Isaac McKneely** had 15 points and four three-pointers, and the Virginia men's team (8-5, 1-1 ACC) rallied in the

second half to beat North Carolina State (8-5, 1-1), 70-67, in Charlottesville.

**Blake Buchanan** gave Virginia a 67-55 lead with 5:02 remaining, but the Cavaliers did not make another field goal the rest of the way. ...

**Cooper Flagg** scored 24 points as No. 14 Duke (11-2, 3-0 ACC) won its seventh straight game, beating Virginia Tech, 88-65, in Durham, North Carolina.

**Toby Lawal** scored 15 of his 19 points in the second half for the Hokies (5-8, 0-2). ...

**Brayden O'Connor** scored 19 points as George Mason (10-4, 1-0) defeated Davidson (10-4, 0-1), 69-57, at EagleBank Arena to begin Atlantic 10 Conference play. ...

**Delonnie Hunt** scored the final six points of the game at the free throw line in the last 24 seconds as Richmond (6-8, 1-0 Atlantic 10) rallied to beat

# Champagnie crashes the glass and Wizards' rotation

## WIZARDS FROM D1

the line every possession to try to go get a rebound," Champagnie said. "And I just take advantage of it. I just have the willpower to go up there and go get 'em."

**A studied anticipation**

Jeff Capel didn't run many plays for Champagnie at Pitt. Keefe said he has yet to run any for him this season in Washington.

Coaches don't need to make Champagnie a focal point; he creates points from nothing.

An illustrative two-play sequence from Washington's Dec. 26 win over the Charlotte Hornets: Champagnie outjumps 7-footer Nick Richards to tip home a missed shot for a layup. Less than a minute later, Champagnie harasses a Hornets player and steals a pass to generate an easy dunk.

"He just had a knack for getting the ball," said Capel, who coached Champagnie for two seasons, the latter ending in first-team all-ACC honors.

"He's as good of a rebounder as I've coached, and I coached a guy

that led the country in rebounding before," Capel said, referencing former national player of the year and No. 1 overall draft pick Blake Griffin at Oklahoma.

The two do it in different ways. "[Griffin] was a freak athlete," Capel said. "Justin is [6-6] and not a freak athlete. He just has a nose for the ball and a competitive toughness."

Champagnie's rebounding senses were honed in film sessions with Panthers assistant coach Tim O'Toole, he said. The two would watch where the ball hit the rim and anticipate its carom.

But Champagnie's offensive rebounding is less a function of predestination than of perseverance. He crashes the glass on nearly every missed shot, knowing most of his forays as a human battering ram will end in failure.

"But at least three or four times ... a game," he said after a recent practice, "somebody is going to miss me and I'm going to go get it. ... I'm a dog."

Does he take pride in the skill? "Oh, yeah. Big time."

**Faith in himself**

Champagnie's mental fortitude also helped him get to D.C. His self-belief never wavered amid years floating between the G League and the NBA, Capel said. Champagnie has long been powered by self-confidence, a trait the coach noticed while recruiting the Brooklyn native in high school.

"He didn't really care what other people thought," Capel said, noting some people in Champagnie's circle were against his decision to join Pittsburgh, believing he wasn't good enough to merit playing time there. "... One of the things that I learned pretty quickly about Justin is, whenever you say something like that to him, then that's like a challenge."

But even as Champagnie's faith in himself endured, chances to prove himself were limited. After playing in 36 games for the Toronto Raptors in the 2021-22 season, he split time with them and the Boston Celtics the following season, playing just five total NBA games.

Last season, as he spent the majority of his time with the Go-

Go, his identical twin, Julian, established himself as an NBA regular with the San Antonio Spurs.

Champagnie kept grinding and waiting.

He usually spends part of the offseason at Pittsburgh. He was optimistic about his chances with the Wizards in his visit before this season, Capel said, after closing last season with Washington and playing well for its summer league team.

It took a couple months, but eventually, opportunity stirred. Champagnie didn't waste it.

"It's a beautiful thing. We've been dreaming about it since we were kids, probably 5 years old," he said of his and Julian's success.

Among the reasons he has thrived recently is a necessary adjustment to being more of a role player. Capel praised Champagnie's improved defensive effort and shooting, both of which shined against the Knicks.

Keefe employed an unorthodox strategy in both matchups, putting Champagnie on star center Karl-Anthony Towns, who is listed at 6 inches taller and 42 pounds

WIZARDS' NEXT THREE		
vs. <b>Chicago Bulls</b>		
Wednesday	7	Monumental
at <b>New Orleans Pelicans</b>		
Friday	8	Monumental
vs. <b>New Orleans Pelicans</b>		
Sunday	6	Monumental
Radio: <i>WTEM (980 AM)</i>		

heavier. The Wizards wing walked gingerly into the media room after the first matchup, joking about how he needed to get into the ice bath.

"I haven't had no opportunities, so I'm not going to come out here and complain and cry about, 'Someone is a 7-footer, I'm tired,' or whatever," he said. "I'm going out there and giving my all every time I'm out there."

He also made a career-high five three-pointers in that game. Even after going 1 for 6 from deep Monday in another loss to the Knicks, Champagnie is shooting a robust 37.5 percent from deep.

Working on his range has been Champagnie's main focus since joining the league. His ability to

George Washington (11-3, 0-1), 66-61, at home.

**Gerald Drumgoole Jr.** led the Revolutionaries with 27 points. **Darren Buchanan Jr.** added 11 points and nine rebounds for George Washington. **Trey Moss** finished with 11 points. ...

**Melvin Council Jr.** scored the game-winning layup with three seconds remaining and finished with 20 points to lead St. Bonaventure (13-1, 1-0 Atlantic 10) past VCU (10-4, 0-1), 77-75, in Olean, New York, upping the Bonnies' winning streak to seven.

**Philip Russell** led the way for the Rams with 26 points. **Joe Bamisile** added 13 points and eight rebounds. ...

Longtime coach **Jack Hartman** and Utah State star **Wayne Estes**, who was killed while trying to provide help at the site of a car crash after his final game, are among eight coaches and players who will be posthumously inducted into the National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame.

The date of the induction ceremony had not been announced.

The other members include **Dave Meyers**, who helped UCLA win the NCAA title in 1973 and 1975; Duquesne's **Sihugo Green**, the first overall pick in the 1956 NBA draft; **Lennie Rosenbluth**, who led North Carolina to a 32-0 record and the 1957 NCAA title; New Mexico State's **Sam Lacey**, the fifth overall pick in the 1970 NBA draft; **John Rudometkin**, the first Southern California player to score more than 1,000 points in two seasons; and St. Bonaventure's **Tom Stith**, who averaged 26.5 points for his career.

**MISC.**

**Second-tier Argyle fires Rooney as coach**

**Wayne Rooney** was fired as Plymouth Argyle coach after just seven months in charge of the struggling Championship team.

The 39-year-old former England and Manchester United striker and D.C. United coach was hired in May and departs with Plymouth last in the English second tier with four wins in 23 games this season.

His final game was a 2-0 loss to Oxford United on Sunday that extended Argyle's winless run to nine games. ...

In a match that lasted 2 hours 27 minutes at the Brisbane International in Australia, 21-year-old **Giovanni Mpetshi Perrier**card of France defeated 29-year-old Australian **Nick Kyrgios** in three tiebreak sets, 7-6 (7-2), 6-7 (7-4), 7-6 (7-3).

Later, **Novak Djokovic**, who beat Kyrgios in the 2022 Wimbledon final, topped Australian wild-card entry **Rinky Hijikata**, 6-3, 6-3.

Earlier, world No. 1 and two-time Australian Open defending champion **Aryna Sabalenka** started her Brisbane singles campaign with a 6-4, 6-0 win over **Renata Zarazua** of Mexico.

Sabalenka will play 15th-seeded **Yulia Putintseva** in the third round, the Kazakhstan player beating American **Kessler McCartney**, 6-2, 7-5.

In another men's singles match, **Frances Tiafoe** downed Australian wild-card entry **Adam Walton**, 7-5 (7-5), 6-3.

Also, tournament No. 5 seed and world No. 22 **Sebastian Korda** withdrew with a lower back injury.

— From news services



# Caps end the year by beating the Bruins

CAPITALS FROM D1

The Bruins took the lead just 1:21 into the game after a dump-in bounced off the end boards, then off Thompson's pad as the right-handed catching netminder tried to push the puck aside, before landing at the feet of Justin Brazeau for a tap-in finish. Washington took a while to shake off the fluky start and get going.

"Just an unfortunate bounce," Thompson said. "Me being the other handed makes it a little bit more difficult to kind of swat that puck away. The guy kind of whiffed on the shot as well. Just overall a crappy play, and those happen."

But after a media timeout with 9:27 left in the first period, the Capitals started to string positive shifts together. They still weren't getting many pucks toward Swayman, but the flow of the game began to level out.

At the 12-minute mark, center Pierre-Luc Dubois missed wide trying to beat Swayman in a narrow window between his mask and the crossbar. Dubois followed up the loose puck behind the net and fed it to Protas at the net front; he shot it past Swayman to tie the game.

Defenseman Martin Fehervary drew a high-sticking penalty on Boston's Mark Kastelic with 3:04 left in the first period, and the Capitals needed just 15 seconds to take the lead.

Jakob Chychrun, who moved to the right half-wall on the power play with John Carlson at the point and Alex Ovechkin back in his "office," danced his way from the boards to the top of the circle, then fired a wrister into the top corner of the net.

"It's been a great start to this year for this team," Chychrun said. "I've been enjoying it. It's just great, feeling like every night, we've got a chance to win. ...



JOHN MCDONNELL FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

The Capitals' Aliaksei Protas, left, battles for a loose puck against the Bruins' Parker Wotherspoon on Tuesday afternoon. Protas scored his 15th and 16th goals of the season.

Hopefully, it was a good way to close the year out and we go into 2025 keeping this momentum going."

Neither team scored again until Protas's empty-net goal late in the third period. Washington killed two penalties in the second period, one on defenseman Matt Roy for interference and one on Chychrun for tripping.

At the 8:40 mark of the third period, Boston's Nikita Zadorov went to the penalty box for interfering with Protas. The Capitals didn't convert on the man advantage, though Ovechkin had several dangerous looks in the final

seconds. Perhaps the most exciting part of the power play was a scrap between 5-foot-10 forward Andrew Mangiapane and 6-foot-5 defenseman Brandon Carlo with 14 seconds remaining on Zadorov's penalty.

"He was feisty," Thompson said, grinning. "I've never seen that out of Mangiapane. I was impressed. I don't think I'd fight him, so good for him."

Mangiapane, Carlo, Washington's Connor McMichael and Boston's Charlie Coyle each received two-minute minor penalties for roughing after the fracas.

The Capitals had to hang on

tight in the final minutes with a one-goal lead. Washington blocked six shots in the last three minutes, and the Bruins pulled Swayman for an extra attacker with just under two minutes remaining.

With nine seconds left in the game, after a defensive zone face-off win by center Nic Dowd, Protas hit the empty net to seal Washington's victory.

"There were times in that game where we weren't playing the way we wanted to, but it's a long year," Chychrun said. "We know we're not going to have our best stuff every night. It's a matter of find-

ing ways to win, and I think we did that tonight."

The Capitals end 2024 with 52 points in 37 games and are atop the Eastern Conference in points percentage at .703. The offense has tailed off significantly from its high-flying start to the season, but Washington has kept on winning games anyway.

"We've got to prepare for these types of games, because the teams are preparing a little more for us, I think," Protas said. "We've got to be ready for these types of games, and I think we were ready. We've got a real good team. Everyone is a warrior in that group."

## BARRY SVRLUGA

# The Capitals showed they can win without Ovechkin. It's so much more fun with him in there.

SVRLUGA FROM D1

shot attempts past Boston goalie Jeremy Swayman — three were on net, three went wide, and one was blocked — the pace is dizzying. Wayne Gretzky and 894 goals are in sight. Stay tuned — every night.

Tuesday reminded the expectant and jubilant home crowd of 18,573 that Ovechkin doesn't have to score for the Caps to win. Likewise, Ovechkin's pursuit of Gretzky's record doesn't have to distract from the organization's seemingly attainable goal of being one of the league's best teams, a unit capable of pushing deep into the playoffs.

"We've got to prepare for these type of games because the teams are prepared a little more for us," said winger Aliaksei Protas, whose breakout season continued with a pair of goals Tuesday. "... We've got a real

good team. Everyone is a warrior in that group. We want to win, and I think we just got to stick together. We'll succeed, and we will have a pretty good chance for success every game."

There are clichés in all of that, but there's also truth. At times last season, Ovechkin's march toward Gretzky felt more like a plod. The Capitals needed to take out a loan to score a goal. The captain clearly seemed burdened by a limited roster. Through his first 21 games in 2023-24, he had all of five goals — not just a dozen fewer than he has this season but three fewer than he ever had in that many games in his career.

Ovechkin surged in the second half and finished with 31 for the season. The Caps sneaked into the playoffs — and then were promptly swept out by the New York Rangers. They underwent an eventful summer of roster overhaul. But until they

took the ice in the fall, there were reasonable questions about both how the new additions would blend with the old guard and how that might benefit or drag down Ovi's pace.

Now, the team's success and Ovechkin's success go hand-in-hand. It's a gleeful combination: an obvious Hall of Famer seeking a legendary record while playing for one of the best teams in the league. Ovechkin needs 25 goals in the Caps' final 45 games, a pace of .556 goals per game that is still below his career rate of .602.

So how about this question: Could he break Gretzky's record in the same season he makes a legitimate run at his second Stanley Cup?

In September, that question would have been laughed out of the bar rooms in Toronto and Montreal and wherever else the hockey cognoscenti drink their Molsons. As 2025 dawns, it's a

legitimate and fascinating idea to ponder.

Back to Tuesday.

"We're struggling right now with our game," Capitals Coach Spencer Carbery said. "It's no secret."

In some ways, that's true. The Capitals are 4-4-0 since Dec. 16, treading water. After scoring four or more goals 15 times in their first 24 games, they have reached that total just three times in the past 13. Carbery has the blueprint for how he wants it to look, and it's not from last year or from another team. It's these same players wearing these same sweaters from maybe six weeks ago.

But before they get back to their A-plus game, shouldn't they get some credit for winning with less than that?

"We know we're not going to have our best stuff every night," said defenseman Jakob Chychrun, whose first-period

power-play goal stood up as the game-winner. "It's a matter of finding ways to win."

Which they did when Ovechkin was out. Which they have now done in two of the three games since he returned: a solid victory at Toronto, followed by a lackluster first period in which you almost could see the lactic acid in their sweat less than 22 hours later in Detroit, followed by Tuesday's blue-collar performance against the Bruins.

Turns out they give out two points whether you win 6-2 and soar or 3-1 on Protas's empty-netter with less than 10 seconds left after a gritty faceoff win from Nic Dowd. And they give out two points whether Ovechkin provides one of the goals or not.

He had his chances Tuesday, particularly on a flurry midway through the third period in which he fired off four attempts

at Swayman in fewer than 35 seconds of game time. Ovechkin from the left circle has been a can't-miss moment in the District for two decades. Now, with Gretzky seemingly around the corner, it's full-on, hold-your-breath stuff.

The best version of the Capitals needs the best version of Ovechkin, full stop. But if this is the Capitals struggling to find their game as their captain works his way back into the flow of things, look out. The teams that can find wins while searching for their highest level are the most dangerous over a full 82 games.

These Caps have the ability to do that — all with Ovechkin in their back pocket, ready to unleash and unload at any moment, stalking down what seemed like an unreachable record with the full backing of a well-rounded roster all around him.

# In the transfer portal era, cultivating QB depth has become an 'impossible' task

QUARTERBACK FROM D1

interceptions — two — in 51 career attempts.

The 21-year-old redshirt sophomore is about to face Notre Dame and its airtight defense Wednesday night, with a whole lot on the line. Sometimes, in a sport built on collisions, that's just how it goes. But Stockton's ascension, forced or otherwise, highlights a major difference between college football and the NFL, in which every team can ensure it has a veteran backup. Under NCAA rules, college players aren't required to sit out a year after transferring. To that end, teams that need a quarterback — and they all need quarterbacks, all the time — can package the opportunity to start with name, image and likeness (NIL) money, which has led to mass free agency every winter and spring.

So in this era of constant player movement, it's challenging to maintain a deep quarterback room year after year.

How challenging?

"Well, it's impossible," Notre Dame quarterbacks coach Gino Guidugli said. "Guys just get impatient, and it becomes a trend, the thing to do. And your value is always highest once you enter the portal. That's the reality."

"It's hard everywhere in the country now, because that's probably the most transient position," Georgia Coach Kirby Smart said. "When you start to look at it, it's in and out, in and out, in and out. At one point it was like ... every starting quarterback had played somewhere else. You can't even follow these guys. You have to have a tag that says where they were, where they've been, where they're going. It's impossible, which, I'm not saying that's wrong."

"I got a son who plays quarterback who is 12 years old. If they don't play, they want to go play somewhere else."

That's the crux of it right there. Behind Beck this season, Smart had Stockton, a Georgia native; Ryan Puglisi, a freshman who arrived last January; and Jaden Rashada, who joined the Bulldogs last spring amid a career that has unfolded in the college tabloids. And while there are dozens of ways to build a roster, coaches and agents agree that the best shot at quarterback depth is through high school recruiting, not the transfer portal.

Georgia is proof of concept. Brock Vandagriff, a 22-year-old junior, could have been Beck's backup this season. He instead played 11 games for Kentucky.



BRETT DAVIS/IMAGN IMAGES

Gunner Stockton, above, took over for injured starter Carson Beck and helped Georgia get past Texas in the SEC title game Dec. 7.

With their pick of teams in the portal, few quarterbacks go somewhere without the promise of a starting job, or at least the chance to compete for one. This winter, one exception was Air Noland, who went from Ohio State (where he was a backup in 2024) to South Carolina (where he slots behind LaNorris Sellers, a way-too-early Heisman candidate for 2025). If programs *do* want to portal an experienced backup, one agent said, they have

two options: "Grossly overpay. Or find someone who grew up loving their team and would do anything to play for them."

In general, the transfer market is booming for a few reasons. Pending a legal settlement of *House v. NCAA*, schools are expected to start directly sharing revenue with athletes in July, meaning there is even more money to lump in with big NIL contracts for 2025 and beyond. But the settlement, if approved by

a judge in April, would also bring a critical wrinkle. It would establish a clearinghouse for lucrative NIL deals, which is the NCAA's attempt to limit the spending and influence of rich donors. And while lawyers doubt the NCAA's ability to regulate those deals without inviting more lawsuits, the settlement has led schools and their donor-led collectives to front-load NIL deals.

Why? Any agreement signed before July 1, 2025, will probably be grandfathered in under the old rules (which means basically no rules at all). So if a school wants to offer, say, \$8 million to a quarterback across two seasons, it might just pay three-quarters of that before the new rules take effect. That's meant more money for top quarterbacks, then a real trickle-down to the backup market.

"Everyone is seeing the value in backup quarterbacks," said Russell White, president of The Collective Association, which represents dozens of NIL collectives. "No other team has the beauty or convenience of Arch Manning as a backup [at Texas]. Not a lot of starting quarterbacks make it through 12, 13 games, plus the season is even longer now for the best teams. It's one of the most important areas to have

depth in, if not the most.

"And with the rev-share money kicking in, you have the ability to pay them more than you have in the past, and in some cases a lot more. So I think people are spending it there. It's a position of need."

Guidugli, Notre Dame's quarterbacks coach, said there's a delicate dance when advising young quarterbacks. On one hand, it's hard to improve without game reps. But on the other hand, starting too early — and in a bad situation — can stunt a quarterback's growth. He understands why players jump for opportunity instead of waiting around. He also feels that, in a lot of cases, there's value in learning behind a veteran, knowing full well that that can't guarantee the job when push comes to shove. "You have to be as honest as you can about his chances," Guidugli said of a make-believe quarterback on the fence between staying and going. "It's never easy."

Naturally, heads and hearts often disagree. And then sometimes, all of a sudden, your first career start is against Notre Dame in the Sugar Bowl.

"Being the backup to being the starter," Stockton said Monday through that soft smile, "it's a little bit different."



# Johnson is a happy Duck, and he’s here to represent

The Rose Bowl-bound wide receiver, who used to live with Nix’s family in Alabama, is grateful for the opportunity to shine for undefeated Oregon

BY CHUCK CULPEPPER

LOS ANGELES — A media day before a major college football game can double as a bulldozer shoveling clichés that threaten to demolish one’s soul even while those clichés remain forgivable for competitive purposes. It involves drifting around a hotel ballroom from player to player at dais to dais or at round table to round table, listening. It’s an odd turn of anthropology, all told. Still, it’s not quite atypical to wander across a player so listenable that you can’t seem to drift anywhere else for the rest of the hour-long session, maybe someone loaded with charisma and gratitude that flow from eyes uncommonly alive.

“This is crazy,” 22-year-old Alabamian Tez Johnson said Monday morning. “The Rose Bowl.”

If you count growing up far from Oregon both geographically and culturally, then becoming an Oregon fan as a small child because of all the televised pizzazz, then residing with Denver Broncos quarterback Bo Nix’s family for the last two years of high school in Alabama on bunk beds with Nix’s younger brother Caleb, who now plays at Clemson, then playing three years at Troy in Alabama, then following Nix to Eugene in 2023 once Nix left Auburn for Oregon, then

becoming the most valuable player in the Big Ten championship game with 11 catches for 181 whopping yards, then getting to this gaudy Rose Bowl set for Wednesday against Ohio State and having Nix tell him over the phone, “I’m so jealous,” then yes, that’s conceivably crazy.

If you add harsher details about Johnson’s father’s suicide during his infancy and mother Shamika Johnson’s fret for his well-being during his teen years in Birmingham, then Johnson going over to the home of Pinson Valley High Coach Patrick Nix for what all the Nixes and Johnsons figured would be a few nights, then becoming such a part of the family that he readily refers to Bo and Caleb as brothers, and Shamika Johnson telling Bill Oram of the Oregonian in a definitive story of 2023, “I think what I did for my child [by allowing him to go], is I saved his life,” and also snaring a 2018 prep state title with 10 receptions for 71 yards from brother Bo in a 26-17 win over Saraland, and then Bo’s mother, Krista Nix, telling Oram about the Oregon part, “It’s almost not true, it’s so storybook,” then, sure, here’s a path to a Rose Bowl that at least comes close to gobsmacking.

Here’s a player who never figured to be at Oregon yet who’s an apt spokesman for Oregon itself.



KYUSUNG GONG/ASSOCIATED PRESS

“I was an Oregon Duck ever since I came out of the womb,” wide receiver Tez Johnson said ahead of the Rose Bowl vs. Ohio State.

“I was an Oregon Duck ever since I came out of the womb,” he said. “I’m one of those guys from Alabama, but I love Oregon, from one coach to the next, one corner to the next. That’s who I am. I’ve turned thousands of people to Oregon fans, from where I’m from. So my journey, I love. I don’t change it for the world. I live and learn, and every day I know that when I walk outside and I wear an ‘O’ on my chest, I’m representing not just Oregon but an entire organization. When I’m

carrying that football, I’ve got the program in my hands, and I want to make it look the best that it’s ever been. So not just for the fan base, but [alumnus and benefactor and Nike founder] Phil Knight, Coach [Dan] Lanning, for people that pour so much into this organization, I don’t take that for granted, and I’m part of it. I’m just happy to be here, and I’m blessed. I’ll always come back to Oregon games, no matter what. You’ll always see me there, like, for real.”

## NFL NOTES

# Cowboys release running back Elliott

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Cowboys released running back Ezekiel Elliott on Tuesday in a quiet end to a Dallas career that started with two rushing titles in three seasons but faded quickly from there.

The move was the end of Elliott’s second stint with the team that drafted him fourth overall in 2016. The Cowboys dumped him in a cost-cutting move after the 2022 season.

This time, Elliott’s release could give the 29-year-old a chance to be a late add for a playoff team looking for veteran help at running back.

The same thing happened last season with four-time Pro Bowler Dalvin Cook, who was cut by the New York Jets and played for the Baltimore Ravens in an opening-round playoff win. Cook is on the Cowboys’ practice squad.

“Out of respect and appreciation for Zeke and wanting to provide him with an opportunity to pursue any potential playoff participation possible, we are releasing him from the Cowboys roster today,” owner and general manager Jerry Jones said in a statement. “As I have said many times previously, Zeke’s impact as one of the greatest to ever play with the Star on their helmet will never change and is etched in our record books and history forever.”

● **BROWNS:** Cleveland’s push to move out of the city and play in a proposed domed stadium encountered a new roadblock.

Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb sent a letter to owners Dee and Jimmy Haslam, saying the city intends to invoke the “Modell Law” to prevent them from leaving the Browns’ lakefront stadium. The lease expires in 2028.

Bibb said he wants a response from the Browns by Jan. 9 and for them to comply or the city will “take appropriate legal action,” the letter states.

The Modell Law was passed in 1996 after former Browns owner Art Modell moved the franchise to Baltimore. It states that no owner of a professional sports team in Ohio playing in a tax-supported stadium can go elsewhere without an agreement with the city in which it plays or unless that city is given six months’ notice with an opportunity to buy the team.

● **49ERS:** Brock Purdy’s second full season as a starting quarterback came to a disappointing finish for San Francisco.

Purdy threw two interceptions in the second half of a 40-34 loss to the Detroit Lions on Monday night before leaving the game with a right elbow injury that will probably sideline him for a meaningless season finale.

Coach Kyle Shanahan said Tuesday that Purdy had a bruise and nerve inflammation but no long-term issues in his surgically repaired right elbow.

## ANALYSIS

# Lions-Vikings showdown puts playoff seeding in the spotlight

BY MARK MASKE

It’s time to dust off the old NFL debate about whether a mediocre (or worse) division winner deserves to host a playoff game against a wild-card team with a superior record.

It could happen in each conference this postseason. And it could be particularly egregious in the NFC.

The Detroit Lions and Minnesota Vikings have matching 14-2 records entering their highly anticipated meeting Sunday night in Detroit to close the regular season. The winner will be the NFC North champion and the NFC’s No. 1 seed, with the conference’s lone opening-round bye and home-field advantage through the NFC championship game. The loser will be the NFC’s No. 5 seed — slated to play a first-round game on the road against the No. 4 seed, most likely the NFC South winner. The Tampa Bay Buccaneers lead that division with a record of 9-7.

The Washington Commanders, with an 11-5 record, are in line to be the NFC’s No. 6 seed. That could bring an opening-round game on the road against either the Los Angeles Rams (10-6), who lead the NFC West, or the Buccaneers.

In the AFC, the Pittsburgh Steelers (10-6) still have hopes of overtaking the Baltimore Ravens for the AFC North title. But for now, they’re in line to be a wild-card team and the No. 5 seed. They would begin the playoffs with a road game against the fourth-seeded Houston Texans, who lead the AFC South at 9-7.

Injustices?

NFL owners have never thought so and have not shown much inclination toward changing the system that guarantees every division winner a home playoff game.

The issue has been raised numerous times, and it came up again in 2023 when the Los Angeles Chargers proposed that a wild-card playoff team could be seeded ahead of a division winner with a losing record if the wild-card team had at least four more victories. But that proposal was not approved by the owners, just as previous efforts to modify the seeding system never got very far. Many owners have expressed a strong conviction that a team that wins its division should be rewarded.

The debate arises this season because of the excellence of the two NFC North front-runners, but it generally has intensified when a division winner has a losing record. That occurred most recently when the Buccaneers won the NFC South in the 2022 season with a record of 8-9. Those Buccaneers hosted an opening-round playoff game against the Dallas Cowboys, who were a wild card after going 12-5. The Cowboys won, 31-14, to send quarterback Tom Brady into retirement.

Other division winners with losing records include the Seattle Seahawks in 2010, the Carolina Panthers in 2014 and Washington in 2020.



STACY BENGS/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sam Darnold and the 14-2 Vikings visit the 14-2 Lions on Sunday night, with the winner taking the NFC North title and No. 1 seed.

The answer, then, is to make certain that you win your division.

### Bridgewater’s return

Quarterback Teddy Bridgewater made his return to the NFL last week, signing with the Lions as a prospective backup to starter Jared Goff.

The Lions now have an experienced quarterback behind Goff as they seek their first Super Bowl appearance. Hendon Hooker has been Goff’s primary backup to this point. Bridgewater was listed as the emergency third quarterback for Monday night’s triumph over the San Francisco 49ers. The Lions will have a literal coach on the field if Bridgewater has to play; he just coached his high school alma mater, Miami Northwestern, to a state title in Florida.

Bridgewater, 32, was Goff’s backup last season. He has made 65 NFL starts for the Vikings, New Orleans Saints, Panthers, Denver Broncos and Miami Dolphins.

“I’ve been in contact with Teddy for a while,” Lions Coach Dan Campbell said last week. “And it was something that was always potentially a possibility. And we all know what Teddy’s been doing down there and giving back to his community, and they won a championship down there. So his debut [in] coaching worked out pretty dang good. But ... it just brings a level of professionalism, you know, veteran presence — somebody that’s great for our team, is great for the position.”

### Williams vs. Daniels

In the season’s early weeks, it may have been provocative to suggest the Chicago Bears erred by taking Caleb Williams over fellow quarterback Jayden Daniels with the top overall selection in the 2024 draft.

That’s no longer the case. Daniels is a bona fide NFL star and has the Commanders headed to the playoffs. He is the league’s ninth-rated passer and probably will be named the offensive rookie of the

year. Williams mostly has struggled, and the Bears have lost 10 straight games, beginning with their Oct. 27 defeat to the Commanders on Daniels’s Hail Mary touchdown pass.

There is no debate, at least for now, about Williams vs. Daniels and their rookie-year accomplishments. The only debate at this point is Williams vs. Bo Nix and Drake Maye. It’s possible that Williams is only the third- or fourth-best quarterback in his draft class.

Nix has played well and could help the Broncos reach the playoffs. They have lost two straight games but still can get to the postseason if they beat the Kansas City Chiefs this weekend, with the Chiefs perhaps resting quarterback Patrick Mahomes and other key starters. Maye’s New England Patriots are having a rough season, with a 3-13 record. But Maye has had some moments of great promise.

None of this is to say that Williams’s rookie season has been calamitous or that his NFL career is not salvageable. He has thrown for 3,393 yards and 19 touchdowns, with just six interceptions, while playing behind a subpar offensive line. He has made the occasional sensational throw.

But Williams appeared to be set up for rookie-year success with a cast of offensive playmakers including tailback D’Andre Swift, tight end Cole Kmet and wide receivers DJ Moore, Keenan Allen and Rome Odunze. That didn’t happen. And now Williams probably will be starting over next season with a new coaching staff, assuming the Bears don’t retain interim head coach Thomas Brown.

### MVP, coach of the year races

Buffalo Bills quarterback Josh Allen once appeared to be a virtual lock to be the league MVP.

That’s no longer the case. Two other quarterbacks, the Ravens’ Lamar Jackson and the Cincinnati Bengals’ Joe Burrow, are firmly in the running. And in the non-quarterback category,

He marvels right on down to the detail of the jerseys, because the jerseys do matter famously at Oregon, where players each week select the game jerseys, those same jerseys that fueled his fandom from afar.

“I never thought I was going to be picking a jersey for a Rose Bowl, like this, ever,” he said. “But like I said, I won’t take it for granted. It’s something I dream of, wearing the jerseys, but having to pick the jersey? It’s unbelievable. I can’t ask for anything more. Oregon is truly, like, what they’ve done is everything. Like, I can’t really explain everything. The love they show me, the fan base, they show me, it’s, I can’t ask for anything more. Like, I’m going to miss it, and it’s going to be something I never, ever experience again — from the uniform, the cleats, the everything. I don’t think any NFL team got more stuff than us. And honestly, I’ve never been so confused picking a jersey ever in my life ... because you got so many combinations, like ‘Warp Speed,’ ‘Throwback,’ ‘Egg Shells,’ ‘Nightmare.’ Goodness, you don’t know what to choose! And then you come out, ‘Let’s wear this, but we’re going to hit ‘em with the Kobe cleats, so ...’”

He’s about to play the Rose Bowl, maybe the foremost last bastion of tradition in a sport gone wild, in a Rose Bowl sta-

dium about to half-fill with a once-distant group over whom he gushes: Oregon fans.

“I knew when I committed to Oregon, I wanted to be the best that ever came to Oregon, receiver-wise,” Johnson said. “I wanted to be one of those guys, a receiver that everyone still talks about, what, 30, 40, 50 years from now. I wanted to be one of those guys. I wanted to be one of those, like, ‘Have you ever seen Tez Johnson play?’ Like, when I have grandkids, like that, ‘Granddad, have you ever played football?’ And just show them highlights. I want to be one of those. I’m very grateful for the opportunity I’ve got. I love the fans. The fans at Autzen [Stadium] are crazy. I can’t *wait* to see them in the Rose Bowl. I know they’re going to show out. It’s part of it. Oregon is a fan base of everyone. They love you, no matter who is the quarterback, no matter who is the receiver, I’ve never seen so many loving people in a stadium. You don’t come across a stadium like that, ever. Normally if you’re doing bad in one stadium they’re going to bash you until you can’t get enough. Oregon is not like that. Oregon is one of those that, you have a bad game, the next game they’re going to be cheering you on like you just committed there. And I love them for that.”

Soon, the session time was up. Sometimes, that’s a shame.

### NFL power rankings

- 1. Chiefs (15-1):** They’re the No. 1 seed. And now the Chiefs are beginning to actually play like it.
- 2. Bills (13-3):** Josh Allen has the offense functioning at a high level as the postseason nears.
- 3. Lions (14-2):** Dan Campbell played to win Monday in a game with no playoff consequences.
- 4. Vikings (14-2):** Kevin O’Connell and Sam Darnold have done wondrous things.
- 5. Eagles (13-3):** It could be Tanner McKee at quarterback in the regular season finale.
6. Ravens (11-5)
7. Commanders (11-5)
8. Rams (10-6)
9. Chargers (10-6)
10. Steelers (10-6)
11. Packers (11-5)
12. Bengals (8-8)
13. Broncos (9-7)
14. Buccaneers (9-7)
15. Dolphins (8-8)
16. Seahawks (9-7)
17. Texans (9-7)
18. Falcons (8-8)
19. Cowboys (7-9)
20. Colts (7-9)
21. Cardinals (7-9)
22. 49ers (6-10)
23. Raiders (4-12)
24. Jaguars (4-12)
25. Saints (5-11)
26. Panthers (4-12)
27. Jets (4-12)
28. Giants (3-13)
29. Patriots (3-13)
30. Browns (3-13)
31. Bears (4-12)
32. Titans (3-13)

ry cap purposes. Watson is expected to remain with the Browns next season but perhaps not as their starter. ...

Former Giants quarterback Eli Manning advanced last week in the process toward the election of the 2025 class for the Pro Football Hall of Fame, slated to be announced during Super Bowl week. Manning and four other players in their first year of eligibility (Luke Kuechly, Terrell Suggs, Adam Vinatieri and Marshal Yanda) are among the 15 modern-era player finalists. Steve Smith Sr., in his fourth year of eligibility, also is a first-time finalist. The other finalists are Antonio Gates, Jahri Evans, Jared Allen, Reggie Wayne, Fred Taylor, Torry Holt, Willie Anderson, Darren Woodson and Eric Allen. ...

Just when the Giants’ long-term best interests would have been served by losing, they won. Their victory Sunday over the Indianapolis Colts moved them out of position for having the top selection in the 2025 draft. ...

Carson Beck, Georgia’s injured quarterback, announced last week that he is entering the draft. He is passing up a chance to stay in college for another year following a season in which his performance disappointed some observers. And now he must work his way back from elbow surgery. Beck was regarded by some analysts as a prospective No. 1 overall pick entering this season. Now, even in a draft class of quarterbacks that is not considered strong, it’s not at all clear where he fits in.





JOE CAMPOREALE/IMAGN IMAGES

**Penn State's Kaytron Allen takes off in the first half. He outshined Boise State star Ashton Jeanty, rushing 17 times for 134 yards.**

#### CANDACE BUCKNER

## Penn State finds the gaps and pounds Boise State

BUCKNER FROM D1

finished with 104 yards, 27 shy of tying Sanders's record. Meanwhile, Penn State defensive end Abdul Carter, who wears Parsons's old number and similarly wrecks offensive game plans, left the field in the second quarter with a left arm injury.

Instead of the main event of Jeanty and Carter, the night showcased the greatness of a Big Ten program that dominates this particular bowl game.

Penn State quarterback Drew Allar commanded the pocket, throwing daggers in the corner or the back of the end zone to his covered receivers. And while Penn State, without Carter, forced Boise State out of its reliance on the running game, it also sat back and watched Boise State implode. The Broncos missed two field goals and committed 10 penalties (including one that wiped out a touchdown), and between Jeanty's slippery hands and quarterback Maddux Madsen's interception on the first play of the fourth quarter, the Broncos hurt themselves.

For Boise State, a dream season stalled after earning a first-round bye in the College Football Playoff. The best college running back in the country had more than three weeks to rest his body and nurse his grudges. Jeanty had carried the ball 30 or more times in seven of the Broncos' final eight games, all wins. And with this workload, he inched closer to the Football Bowl Subdivision single-season rushing record set by Sanders in 1988.

However, all that production did not propel Jeanty to the Heisman Trophy. He came close — placing second and finishing just 214 points behind winner Travis Hunter — but that wasn't enough. Jeanty said that he felt he “should’ve walked” away with the award. And he found allies all the way in Happy Valley who thought the same.

“I’ll flat-out say it: He should have won the Heisman,” Penn State lineman Olaivavega Ioane told reporters ahead of the Fiesta Bowl. “He’s a baller. I personally haven’t seen anybody play the way he plays.”

Ever since this matchup became reality, coaches have drilled into Penn State's players the proper way to tackle Jeanty. Like, trying to wrap him up in an unloving embrace and bear-hug the man until, finally, he goes down.

“You can’t just throw a shoulder; you can’t just aim for the knee. ... That’s a generational player right there,” Penn State offensive lineman Sam Worley said about Jeanty before the game. Correct words, although Worley could watch from the sideline while his defensive brethren took his advice.

As for a player who *would* have to tackle this problem, linebacker Dominic DeLuca shared this heading into the matchup: “I would just say wrapping up and running through the pocket, and also getting all 11 guys at the football.”



CHRISTIAN PETERSEN/GETTY IMAGES

**Jeanty, the Heisman Trophy runner-up, was held in check by the Nittany Lions, carrying the ball 30 times for only 104 yards.**

At times, it seemed as if Jeanty had to run against twice that many tacklers. On the first play of the game, four Penn State defenders met Jeanty at the line of scrimmage, then ushered him back into the empty backfield. Though Boise State moved downfield thanks to a pair of pass completions, when Madsen tried what usually had been a sure thing — a swing pass to Jeanty on third and seven — the Nittany Lions swallowed up the play short of the first down. With Jeanty contained, Penn State forced the Broncos into settling into a shanked 47-yard field goal attempt and no points.

Jeanty spent the rest of the first half trying to unbox himself from Penn State's defense. When he wasn't being crowded and swallowed up, Jeanty found slivers of daylight on the edge — only to fumble the ball twice. While Boise State couldn't lean on Jeanty, Penn State realized that two could be greater than one Heisman runner-up.

With running backs Singleton and Kaytron Allen splitting carries through the first drive, the Nittany Lions established a rhythm. Allen gaining the first down on third and short. Then, Singleton cobbling up 11 yards on consecutive runs. Followed by Allen breaking free off the edge for 23 yards, then overpowering Boise State's front for another 10 yards. The one-two jabs had a devastating effect, then Penn State threw the knockout punch when Allar floated an 11-yard pass to his favorite tight end target, Tyler Warren, on the edge of the end zone.

That nine-play, 72-yard scoring drive was bruising, even methodical. Yet for their next trick, the Nittany Lions showed that they can work fast, too. They needed just four plays and less than 90 seconds to score another touchdown, with Allar tossing up a rainbow to wideout Omari Evans for the 38-yarder. However, leading 14-0 and on their way to turning the Fiesta Bowl into a blowout, Allar fumbled on Penn State's third drive, the first sign that Boise State was still an active participant on the field.

In the second quarter, the Broncos turned back to Jeanty, but following his second fumble, in which the ball appeared to slip out of his hands, he remained on the sideline as Boise State finished what turned into an eight-play, 52-yard scoring drive. That was fullback Tyler Crowe — not Jeanty — running through defenders and pretending as though he had kicked down the door of the end zone after his eight-yard touchdown run. Through the half, Jeanty had just 40 yards on 13 carries, far below his season average of 7.3 yards per carry, and Penn State held the 17-7 advantage.

In the third quarter, Penn State pulled ahead by another touchdown with Allar connecting once again with Warren. Then, Singleton's long run capped the game as Penn State improved to 8-0 in the Fiesta Bowl, the most wins of any program in its history.

#### PRO BASKETBALL

##### NBA

###### EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	9	7	57%	1
Philadelphia	13	7	43%	9%
Brooklyn	12	20	37%	11½
Toronto	7	26	21%	17

SOUTHEAST	W	L	Pct	GB
Orlando	20	14	58%	
Atlanta	18	15	54%	1½
Miami	16	14	53%	2
Charlotte	7	25	21%	12
Washington	5	25	16%	13

CENTRAL	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Cleveland	28	4	87%	—
Milwaukee	17	14	54%	10½
Indiana	16	18	47%	13
Chicago	15	18	45%	13½
San Antonio	14	18	43%	14

###### WESTERN CONFERENCE

SOUTHWEST	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Memphis	22	11	66%	—
Houston	21	11	65%	½
Dallas	20	13	60%	2
San Antonio	16	16	51%	5
New Orleans	5	28	15%	17

NORTHWEST	W	L	Pct	GB
x-L.A. Lakers	27	5	84%	—
Denver	18	13	58%	8½
Minnesota	17	15	53%	10
Portland	11	21	34%	16
Utah	7	24	22%	19½

PACIFIC	W	L	Pct	GB
x-L.A. Lakers	18	13	58%	—
L.A. Clippers	19	14	57%	½
Golden State	16	16	50%	2½
x-Phoenix	15	16	48%	3
Sacramento	14	19	42%	5

##### x-Late game

###### TUESDAY'S RESULTS

at Boston 125, Toronto 71  
Milwaukee 120, at Indiana 112  
at San Antonio 122, L.A. Clippers 86  
at Oklahoma City 113, Minnesota 105  
Cleveland at L.A. Lakers, late  
Memphis at Phoenix, late

##### WEDNESDAY'S GAMES

Chicago at Washington, 7  
Orlando at Detroit, 7  
Brooklyn at Toronto, 7:30  
New Orleans at Miami, 7:30  
Utah at New York, 7:30  
Dallas at Houston, 8  
Atlanta at Denver, 9  
Philadelphia at Sacramento, 10

#### Bucks 120, Pacers 112

MILWAUKEE	30	23	35	32	—	120
INDIANA	28	36	27	21	—	112

**MILWAUKEE:** Antetokounmpo 11-20 8-13 30, Middleton 4-11 6-6 15, Lopez 7-11 2-2 16, Jackson Jr. 2-3 0-0 4, Portis 3-14 0-0 9, Portis 12-12 2-14, Prince 4-9 0-1 9, Green 3-6 0-0 9, Rollins 0-0 0-0 0, Trent Jr. 5-9 0-0 14. **Totals:** 45-97 18-24 120.

**INDIANA:** Mathurin 10-18 2-5 25, Siakam 6-14 5-8 20, Turner 7-12 0-0 16, Haliburton 3-13 5-6 12, Wembhard 4-14 0-0 10, Toppin 3-2 4-4, Walker 3-5 4-4 11, Bryant 1-11 1-3, McConnell 5-5 0-0 2-6, Sheppard 2-5 0-0 5. **Totals:** 40-90 19-30 112.

**Three-point Goals:** Milwaukee 12-33 (Trent Jr. 4-5, Green 3-6, Lillard 3-9, Middleton 1-4, Prince 1-4, Portis 0-2, Lopez 0-3), Indiana 13-37 (Mathurin 3-5, Siakam 3-7, Wembhard 2-5, Walker 1-5, Sheppard 1-4, Haliburton 1-6, McConnell 0-1, Toppin 1-1). **Fouled Out:** None. **Rebounds:** Milwaukee 51 (Portis 15), **Fouled Out:** None. **Assists:** Milwaukee 27 (Middleton 7), Indiana 26 (Haliburton 7). **Total Fouls:** Milwaukee 22, Indiana 20. At 17:24 (20,000)

#### Celtics 125, Raptors 71

TORONTO .....	12	23	18	18	—	71
BOSTON .....	23	22	45	35	—	125

**TORONTO:** Aghajiri 7-10 0-2, Barnes 7-19 1-1 16, Poeltl 3-4 1-2 7, Mitchell 3-4 1-2 9, Walter 1-10 1-23, Battle 3-8 0-0 9, Boucher 2-7 2-2 7, Chomche 1-1 0-0 2, Mogbo 0-0 0-0 0, Fernando 0-1 0-0 0, Olynyk 2-5 0-0 5, B.Brown 2-7 1-2 6, Lawson 0-3 0-0 0, Sheard 2-10 0-0 5. **Totals:** 27-86 7-11 71.

**BOSTON:** Brown 6-13 0-0 12, Tatum 6-13 7-11 23, Horford 0-7 0-0 10, Holiday 5-9 0-0 14, White 6-8 1-2 16, Hauser 4-7 0-0 12, Peterson 2-3 0-0 5, Walsh 4-6 1-2 10, Tillman 1-1 0-0 2, Kornet 1-2 0-0 2, Queta 4-5 0-0 8, Pritchard 7-13 0-0 19, Springer 1-1 0-0 2. **Totals:** 47-87 19 125.

**Three-point Goals:** Celtics 10-40 (Battle 3-6, Mitchell 2-2, B.Brown 1-2, Olynyk 1-2, Boucher 1-4, Sheard 1-5, D.Lawson 1-3, Aghajiri 0-4, Walter 0-4), Boston 22-43 (Pritchard 5-8, Holiday 4-5, Hauser 4-7, Tatum 4-9, White 3-3, Walsh 1-1, Peterson 1-2, J.Brown 0-2, Horford 0-6). **Fouled Out:** None. **Rebounds:** Toronto 44 (Barnes, Poeltl 13), Boston 49 (J.Brown 9). **Assists:** Toronto 18 (Mitchell, Poeltl, Sheard 3), Boston 29 (Holiday, Horford, Pritchard 4). **Total Fouls:** Toronto 16, Boston 10. At 19:15 (18,624)

#### Spurs 122, Clippers 86

LA CLIPPERS	17	26	20	31	—	86
SAN ANTONIO	31	32	28	31	—	122

**LA CLIPPERS:** Jones Jr. 2-5 1-2 6, Powell 4-12 4-15, Zubac 2-7 1-2 5, Dunn 3-6 0-0 7, Harden 5-11 5-17, Brown 2-6 0-0 5, Miller 0-1 0-0 2, K.Jones 2-6 0-0 4, Batum 0-1 0-0 0, Coffey 6-12 0-0 14, Porter Jr. 1-6 0-0 2, Bamba 1-4 0-0 2, Hyland 2-0 2-7. **Totals:** 30-87 15 186.

**SAN ANTONIO:** Barnes 4-9 0-0 11, Sochan 2-5 0-0 4, Wembanyama 10-18 6-7 27, Paul 3-5 0-0 7, Vassell 4-14 0-0 8, Chambliss 2-3 8-11 9, Cissok 2-4 2-0 0, Conley 5-10 2-16, Minnott 3-4 0-0 4, Collins 2-5 0-0 7, Johnson 7-11 2-2 17, Basseey 1-3 0-0 2, Branham 2-4 0-0 5, Castle 5-8 5-6 15, T.Jones 1-2 0-0 2, Wesley 1-1 0-0 2. **Totals:** 48-98 17 192.

**Three-point Goals:** L.A. Clippers 11-41 (Powell 3-10, Coffey 2-4, Harden 2-6, Brown 1-1, Dunn 1-3, Jones Jr. 1-3, Hyland 1-3, Lawson 1-3, Aghajiri 0-4, Walter 0-4), Boston 22-43 (Pritchard 5-8, Holiday 4-5, Hauser 4-7, Tatum 4-9, White 3-3, Walsh 1-1, Peterson 1-2, J.Brown 0-2, Horford 0-6). **Fouled Out:** None. **Rebounds:** Toronto 44 (Barnes, Poeltl 13), Boston 49 (J.Brown 9). **Assists:** Toronto 18 (Mitchell, Poeltl, Sheard 3), Boston 29 (Holiday, Horford, Pritchard 4). **Total Fouls:** L.A. Clippers 15, San Antonio 15. At 18:60 (18,581)

#### Thunder 113, Timberwolves 105

MINNESOTA	24	28	23	30	—	105
OKLAHOMA CITY	11	25	43	24	—	113

**MINNESOTA:** McDaniels 3-8 0-0 7, Randle 5-12 0-0 11, Gobert 3-4 2-3, A.Edwards 6-12 4-20 0, Conley 5-10 2-16, Minnott 3-4 0-0 6, Reid 8-12 2-19, Alexander-Walker 3-3 0-0 8, DiVincenzo 3-10 2-10 2. **Totals:** 39-79 12 105.

**OKLAHOMA CITY:** Dort 5-12 0-0 14, Jal.Williams 6-12 1-4 14, Hartenstein 5-10 5-5 15, Gilgeous-Alexander 15-23 7-9 40, Wallace 1-8 3-4 5, Jay.Williams 1-4 0-0 3, K.Williams 2-4 0-0 5, Joe 3-4 0-0 7, Mitchell 1-4 1-1 3, Wiggins 3-6 0-0 7. **Totals:** 42-89 17 23 113.

**Three-point Goals:** Minnesota 15-38 (A.Edwards 4-7, Conley 4-7, Alexander-Walker 2-2, DiVincenzo 2-7, Randle 1-4, McDaniels 1-5, Reid 1-5, Minnott 0-1), Oklahoma City 12-36 (Dort 4-7, Gilgeous-Alexander 3-5, K.Williams 1-2, Wiggins 1-2, Jal.Williams 1-4, Jay.Williams 1-4, Joe 1-4, Hartenstein 0-1, Mitchell 0-3, Wallace 0-4). **Fouled Out:** None. **Rebounds:** Minnesota 43 (Reid 8), Oklahoma City 37 (Hartenstein 10). **Assists:** Minnesota 21 (Randle 6), Oklahoma City 25 (Jal.Williams, Wallace 7). **Total Fouls:** Minnesota 18, Oklahoma City 13. At 18:20 (18,203)

#### COLLEGE BASKETBALL

##### NCAA men

###### TUESDAY'S RESULTS

###### EAST

Duke 88, Virginia Tech 65

St. Bonaventure 77, VCU 75

Wake Forest 81, Syracuse 71

###### SOUTH

Georgia Tech 86, Notre Dame 75

Marquette 88, Brown 54

Richmond 66, George Washington 61

Tennessee 67, Norfolk State 67

###### MIDWEST

Croighton 57, St. John's 56

Marquette 78, Providence 50

West Virginia 62, Kansas 61

Xavier 94, Seton Hall 72

###### SOUTHWEST

Baylor 81, Utah 56

Central Florida 87, Texas Tech 83

###### WEST

BYU 76, Arizona State 56

Colorado State 72, San Jose State 50

##### NCAA women

###### TUESDAY'S RESULTS

###### EAST

Princeton 75, Le Moyne 43

###### SOUTH

Elon 97, Lees-Mcrae 53

###### MIDWEST

Minnesota 59, Wisconsin 50

Omaha 45, Northwestern 65

Washington 84, Illinois 75

###### WEST

Utah 69, Arizona 48

#### SCOREBOARD

#### HOCKEY

##### NHL

ATLANTIC	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Toronto	38	23	13	2	48	118	106
Florida	38	23	13	2	48	131	119
Boston	39	20	15	4	44	102	118
Tampa Bay	34	20	12	2	42	134	97
Ottawa	36	15	2	2	40	110	103
Montreal	37	17	17	3	37	113	127
Detroit	37	15	18	4	34	98	120
Buffalo	38	14	20	4	32	116	128

METROPOLITAN	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	37	25	10	2	52	135	96
x-New Jersey	39	24	13	3	51	130	98
x-Carolina	36	22	13	1	45	125	102
Pittsburgh	39	17	17	5	39	120	145
Philadelphia	38	17	4	3	38	119	136
x-Columbus	37	15	16	6	36	123	133
N.Y. Islanders	38	14	17	7	35	102	122
N.Y. Rangers	36	16	19	1	33	101	113

CENTRAL	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Winnipeg	39	27	11	1	55	142	96
x-Minnesota	37	22	11	4	48	108	101
Colorado	38	23	15	0	46	130	123
Dallas	36	22	13	1	45	116	91
St. Louis	39	18	17	4	40	106	117
x-Utah	36	14	6	3	38	105	108
x-Nashville	37	11	19	7	29	88	117
Chicago	38	12	24	2	26	96	129

PACIFIC	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vegas	37	25	9	3	53	131	102
Los Angeles	36	21	10	5	47	113	95
x-Edmonton	36	21	12	3	45	117	104
x-Vancouver	35	17	10	8	42	111	112
x-Calgary	36	17	12	7	41	98	110
Seattle	38	17	19	2	36	111	119
x-Anaheim	35	14	17	4	32	88	109
San Jose	40	11	23	6	28	105	146

##### x-Late game

###### MONDAY'S RESULTS

at Florida 5, N.Y. Rangers 3

at Winnipeg 3, Nashville 0

at Seattle 5, Utah 2

###### TUESDAY'S RESULTS

at Washington 3, Boston 1

at Toronto 3, N.Y. Islanders 1

Montreal 3, at Vegas 2

St. Louis 6, Chicago 2 at Wrigley Field

at Colorado 5, Winnipeg 2

at Dallas 4, Buffalo 2



### Aptos Wanted

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### Legal Notices

Covenant United Methodist Preschool and Terrific Toys admits children of any race, color, religion, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin in admission of its educational policies, admissions policies, and other school administered programs.

In a continuing effort to reduce the number of speeding vehicles in City of Rockville neighborhoods, the Rockville City Police Department will begin deployment of a speed monitoring system starting January 1, 2025. While the system will be fully functional, citations will not be issued for 30 days after a 30-day grace period, citations will be issued for vehicles exceeding posted speed limit by 12 mph or more. Please contact Major Bill Nieberding at 202-414-8965, or by email at [bnieberding@rockvillegov.gov](mailto:bnieberding@rockvillegov.gov) for additional information.

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### Fauquier County

**TRUSTEE'S SALE OF 9189 OLD CULPEPER ROAD, WARRENTON, VA 10186**

In execution of a Deed of Trust in the original principal amount of \$100,000.00, with an annual interest rate of 3.625000% dated January 6, 2017, recorded among the land records of the Circuit Court for the Fauquier as Deed Book 1536, Page 1927, the undersigned appointed Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at public auction all that property located in the Fauquier on the courthouse steps at the front of the Circuit Court building for the County of Fauquier located at 40 Culpeper Street, Warrenton, Virginia on January 23, 2025 at 1:00 PM, the property with improvements to wit:

9189 OLD CULPEPER RD, 6982/22 7905/000, 6982227905000  
Tax Map No. 6982/22-7905/000

THIS COMMUNICATION IS FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR.

TERMS OF SALE: ALL CASH. A bidder's deposit of 10% of the sale price, will be required in cash, certified or cashier's check. Settlement within fifteen (15) days of sale, otherwise trustees may forfeit deposit. Additional terms to be announced at sale. Loan type: Conventional. Reference Number 24-297546.

PROFESSIONAL FORECLOSURE CORPORATION OF VIRGINIA, Substitute Trustees, C/O LOGS LEGAL GROUP LLP, Mailing Address: 10130 Perimeter Parkway, Suite 400, Charlotte, North Carolina 28216 (703) 449-5800

NOV 26DEC 25, JAN 1 2025 QRTDFA04B2

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Call 202-334-5787 or [email businessopport@awashpost.com](mailto:businessopport@awashpost.com)

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### Bids & Proposals

**The District of Columbia Housing Enterprises (DCHE)** requires licensed, qualified professionals to provide caper Carrollburg Parking Lots for this solicitation.

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**  
SOLICITATION NO.: 02-2025  
CAPPER CARROLLSBURG PARKING LOTS

**Solicitation Documents will be available beginning Thursday, January 02, 2025,** and can be found on Bonfire at:  
<https://dchousing.bonfirehub.com/portal/>

Respondents will then need to log in and locate this RFP for all related documents. It is the Proposers responsibility to check the Bonfire site regularly to stay current on the documents that are available as this is the primary communication site for this RFP.

To access files Vendors are required to Register on the Bonfire platform. See the registration link below.  
<https://vendor.bonfirehub.com/>

DCHE will provide either a live or pre-recorded demonstration for any vendors unfamiliar with the platform.

**PROPOSAL RESPONSES ARE DUE ON OR BEFORE Wednesday, January 29, 2025, at 12:00 p.m.**

Email Abdul Karim Farooqi, Procurement Specialist (OAS) at [afarooqi@dchehousing.org](mailto:afarooqi@dchehousing.org) with copy to [business@dchehousing.org](mailto:business@dchehousing.org) for additional information.

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### Collectibles

Vintage toys 1950s/60s games, wooden puzzles, red haired cabbage patch singer sewing machine cash register Japanese doll w/wigs, punk bed doll bed w/ladders, cotton dresses, tea sets. Can send pics. [kkeese@gmail.com](mailto:kkeese@gmail.com)

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### Estate Sales

ARLINGTON, VA Full House Sale, Thur, Fri, Sat & Sun 10-3 4567 25th Rd North. See [www.caringtransitionsnova.com](http://www.caringtransitionsnova.com) for details

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### Dogs for Sale

**Miniature Schnauzers** We have 2 female S&P AKC puppies. Tails & black eyes removed, worming and shots, immediately available whelped 10/26/24. \$1500 each. Call 571-1140 for additional details.

**Standard Poodle** Standard Poodles - AKC registered, genetically cleared. Black and Apricot Males are available. Black and Silver Females are available. Litter box trained and socialized. They will be ready to go home 11/06. Please call for more information. 540-330-7961

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### Dogs for Sale

**Tibetan Mastiff** deposits are being accepted for companion and/or show Tibetan Mastiff puppies available for sale to approved homes. Black and tan and gold babies. Please read and research this noble breed. You may text 540-233-3570

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### Adopt Dogs

**German Shepherd Puppies** ACA Registered black and tan, first shots and wormed, parents on premises, 8 weeks old, \$600 each 540-838-3392

### Trustees Sale - DC

LTX LAW GROUP  
1966 GREENSPRING DRIVE, SUITE LL2  
LUTHERVILLE, MD 21093  
410-238-2840

**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE REAL PROPERTY**  
2223 TAYLOR STREET, NE WASHINGTON, D.C. 20018

By virtue of a certain Purchase Money Construction Deed of Trust from Exodus, Inc. dated January 27, 2021 and duly recorded February 23, 2021 as Instrument No. 2021023809 ("the Deed of Trust") among the Land Records of the District of Columbia ("the Land Records"), which Deed of Trust also constitutes a security agreement and creates a security interest in all fixtures described in the Deed of Trust, a default having occurred in the payment of the indebtedness secured thereby and the covenants contained therein, and at the request of the party secured thereby (the "Noteholder"), and in accordance with Public Law 90-566 and following mailing of the Notice of Foreclosure Sale of Real Property or Condominium Unit recorded among the Land Records on November 25, 2024 as Instrument No. 2024110530 and the recordation of the Affidavit of Non-Residential Mortgage Foreclosure recorded among the Land Records on November 7, 2024 as Instrument No. 2024105117 the undersigned Substitute Trustees will sell, at public auction, within the office of ALEX COOPER AUCTIONEERS, INC., 4910 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N.W., SUITE 100, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20016 on

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2025 AT 11:35 AM**

All that piece or parcel of land, together with the improvements, rights, privileges and appurtenances to the same belonging, situate in the District of Columbia, described as follows:

All that piece or parcel of land, together with the improvements, rights, privileges and appurtenances to the same belonging, situate in the District of Columbia, described as follows, that is to say: Being lot 56 in square 4238 in subdivision made by John M. King as per plat recorded in liber 96 at folio 88 of the Records of the Office of the Surveyor for the District of Columbia.

TOGETHER WITH any and all buildings, structures, improvements or appurtenances now erected on the above-described land, including, without limitation, all equipment, apparatus, machinery and fixtures of any kind or character forming a part of said buildings, structures, improvements or appurtenances, and any furniture, furnishings, equipment, machinery and other personal property owned and located in, upon or about the above-described land and any buildings thereon all as more particularly described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust (the "Property"). The "Property" does not include any property owned by any tenants at the Property.

**TERMS OF SALE:** ALL CASH. The Property will be offered as an entirety only. The bid that yields the highest price for the Property will be accepted by the Substitute Trustees (unless the sale is postponed or cancelled) and all bids will be provisional until acceptance. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Substitute Trustees absolutely reserve the right to postpone the sale and/or cancel the sale at any time until the auctioneer announces that the Property is "sold" and the Substitute Trustees receives the deposit in the required amount and form. A deposit in the amount of \$50,000.00 will be required at the time of sale as a condition to bidding. Such deposit must be by cashier's check or certified check or in such other form as the Substitute Trustees may determine in their sole discretion, which check shall be payable to "Mark H. Wittstadt or Kevin Hildebeidel, Substitute Trustees." The deposit must be increased to 10% of the purchase price within 2 business days after consummation of the sale and delivered to the Substitute Trustees in the same form of funds as the initial deposit. The Noteholder secured by the Deed of Trust (or any related party) shall be exempted by the Substitute Trustees from submitting any bidding deposit. The Substitute Trustees will, as a condition to the sale, require all potential bidders except the Noteholder to show their deposit before any bidding begins. The retained deposit of the successful purchaser shall be applied, without interest, to the successful purchaser's credit at settlement; provided, however, that in the event the successful purchaser does not consummate the purchase in accordance with the terms

### Trustees Sale - DC

MILES & STOCKBRIDGE P.C.  
1201 Pennsylvania Ave., Suite 900, Washington, DC 20004  
(202) 737-9600

**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE COMMERCIAL OFFICE BUILDING**

1200 18th STREET, NW WASHINGTON, DC 20036

Under and by virtue of the power of sale contained in that certain Deed of Trust, Assignment of Leases and Rents, Fixture Filing and Security Agreement from Ring Associates L.L.C. ("Borrower") dated as of October 28, 2019, and recorded with the District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds ("Land Records") as Instrument No. 2019117777 for the benefit of U.S. Commercial Mortgage Loan Portfolio, A Series of Global Investment Fund I, a Delaware statutory trust as affected by that certain Assignment and Assumption of Interest Under Deed of Trust, Assignment of Leases and Rents, Fixture Filing and Security Agreement dated June 24, 2024, for the benefit of Paragon Real Estate Holdings II, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company and recorded with said Land Records as Instrument No. 2024058914, as further affected by that certain Assignment and Assumption of Interest Under Deed of Trust, Assignment of Leases and Rents, Fixture Filing and Security Agreement dated July 26, 2024, for the benefit of DIV Ring Leader, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company and recorded with said Land Records as Instrument No. 2024070616 (collectively, the "Deed of Trust"), and that certain Notice of Foreclosure Sale of Real Property, which was recorded in the Land Records on December 4, 2024 as Instrument No. 2024113244 pursuant to Sections 42-815 and 42-818 of the D.C. Code, the holder of the indebtedness secured thereby, DIV Ring Leader, LLC (or any assignee, the "Beneficiary"), having appointed John T. Farnum and Addison J. Chappell as Substitute Trustees by instrument duly executed, acknowledged and recorded among the Land Records as Instrument No. 2024112660, default having occurred under the terms of said Deed of Trust and at the request of the Beneficiary, the undersigned Substitute Trustees will offer the following property for sale at Public Auction:

**Sale to be held at the Offices of Alex Cooper Auctioneers, Inc. 4910 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 100 Washington, DC 20016 On Thursday, January 9, 2025 at 12:00 P.M.**

**PROPERTY DESCRIPTION (the "Real Estate"):**

All of that certain lot or parcel of land, together with all improvements thereon located, situated and lying in the District of Columbia, and being more particularly described as follows:

LOTS NUMBERED 1, 58, 59, 60 and 61 in Square numbered 139 in a subdivision made by Ebon C. Ingersoll as per plat recorded in Liber J. H. K. at folio 179 in the Office of the Surveyor for the District of Columbia, more particularly described in metes and bounds as follows:

BEGINNING at the Southeast corner of said Lot 1, being the intersection of the North line of M Street with the West line of Eighteenth Street and running thence North along the West



more

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**LTX LAW GROUP**  
**1966 GREENSPRING DRIVE, SUITE LL2**  
**LUTHERVILLE, MD 21093**  
**410-238-2840**

**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE**  
**REAL PROPERTY**  
**2223 TAYLOR STREET, NE**  
**WASHINGTON, D.C. 20018**

By virtue of a certain Purchase Money Construction Deed of Trust from Exodus, Inc. dated January 27, 2021 and duly recorded February 23, 2021 as Instrument No. 2021023809 (the "Deed of Trust") among the Land Records of the District of Columbia (the "Land Records"), which Deed of Trust also constitutes a security agreement and creates a security interest in all fixtures described in the Deed of Trust, a default having occurred in the payment of the indebtedness secured thereby and the covenants contained therein, and at the request of the party secured thereby (the "Noteholder"), and in accordance with Public Law 90-566 and following mailing of the Notice of Foreclosure Sale of Real Property or Condominium Unit recorded among the Land Records on November 25, 2024 as Instrument No. 2024110530 and the recordation of the Affidavit of Non-Residential Mortgage Foreclosure recorded among the Land Records on November 7, 2024 as Instrument No. 2024105117 the undersigned Substitute Trustees will sell, at public auction, within the office of ALEX COOPER AUCTIONEERS, INC., 4910 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N.W., SUITE 100, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20016 on

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2025 AT 11:35 AM**

All that piece or parcel of land, together with the improvements, rights, privileges and appurtenances to the same belonging, situate in the District of Columbia, described as follows:

All that piece or parcel of land, together with the improvements, rights, privileges and appurtenances to the same belonging, situate in the District of Columbia, described as follows, that is to say: Being lot 56 in square 4238 in subdivision made by John M. King as per plat recorded in liber 96 at folio 88 of the Records of the Office of the Surveyor for the District of Columbia.

TOGETHER WITH any and all buildings, structures, improvements or appurtenances now erected on the above-described land, including, without limitation, all equipment, apparatus, machinery and fixtures of any kind or character forming a part of said buildings, structures, improvements or appurtenances, and any furniture, furnishings, equipment, machinery and other personal property owned and located in, upon or about the above-described land and any buildings thereon all as more particularly described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust (the "Property"). The "Property" does not include any property owned by any tenants at the Property.

**TERMS OF SALE: ALL CASH.** The Property will be offered as an entirety only, but the bid that yields the highest price for the Property will be accepted by the Substitute Trustees (unless the sale is postponed or cancelled) and all bids will be provisional until acceptance. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Substitute Trustees absolutely reserve the right to postpone the sale and/or cancel the sale at any time until the auctioneer announces that the Property is "sold" and the Substitute Trustees receives the deposit of the required amount and form. A deposit in the amount of \$50,000.00 will be required at the time of sale as a condition to bidding. Such deposit must be by cashier's check or certified check or in such other form as the Substitute Trustees may determine in their sole discretion, which check shall be payable to "Mark H. Wittstadt or Kevin Hildebeidel, Substitute Trustees." The deposit must be increased to 10% of the purchase price within 2 business days after consummation of the sale and delivered to the Substitute Trustees in the same form of funds as the initial deposit. The Noteholder secured by the Deed of Trust (or any related party) shall be exempted by the Substitute Trustees from submitting any bidding deposit. The Substitute Trustees will, as a condition of the sale, require all potential bidders except the Noteholder to show the deposit before any bidding begins. The retained deposit of the successful purchaser shall be applied, without interest, to the successful purchaser's credit at settlement; provided, however, that in the event the successful purchaser does not consummate the purchase in accordance with the terms of sale as herein provided, such deposit, will be forfeited, and after payment of all expenses and commissions due in connection with the defaulted sale, the balance shall be applied to the indebtedness due under the terms of the note and Deed of Trust. The terms of sale must be complied with, and settlement consummated thereon within 25 days from the day of sale unless extended at the sole discretion of the Substitute Trustees. **TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE.** The balance of the purchase price over and above the retained deposit, with interest thereon at the default rate of 18% per annum being charged from the date of sale through the date of receipt of the balance of the purchase price, will be due at settlement by bank wire transfer; and if not so paid, the Substitute Trustees as stated above will forfeit the deposit and reserves the right to resell the Property at the risk and cost of the defaulting purchaser, after such advertisement and on such terms as the Substitute Trustees may deem proper, and to avail himself and the Noteholder of any legal or equitable rights against the defaulting purchaser.

The Property is sold subject to the rights of any, of parties in possession, if such rights have priority over the Deed of Trust or have been granted non-disturbance or similar rights, and to any and all covenants, conditions, restrictions, easements, rights of way, and limitations of record. The Property will be sold "WHERE IS" and in "AS IS" condition without any warranty as to condition, express or implied, and without any representation or warranty as to the accuracy of the information furnished to prospective bidders by the Substitute Trustees or any other party, if any, and without any other representations or warranty of any nature. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the Property will be sold without representation or warranty as to (i) title to the Property, (ii) the nature, condition, structural integrity, or fitness for a particular use of any improvements, fixtures or personal property included within the Property, (iii) the environmental condition of the Property or the compliance of the Property with federal, state and local laws and regulations concerning the presence or disposal of hazardous substances, (iv) compliance of the Property with the Americans with Disabilities Act or any similar law, (v) compliance of the Property with any zoning laws or ordinances and any and all applicable safety codes, or (vi) compliance with any tenants' rights or similar laws, and acceptance of the Deed to the Property by the successful purchaser shall constitute a waiver of any claims against the Substitute Trustees or the Noteholder concerning any of the foregoing matters. The successful purchaser recognizes that any investigation, examination, or inspection of the Property is within the control of the owner or other parties in possession of the Property and not within the control of the Substitute Trustees or the Noteholder.

Conveyance shall be by Substitute Trustees' Deed, without covenant or warranty, express or implied. The risk of loss or damage by fire or other casualty to the Property from and after the time of sale shall be the sole responsibility of the purchaser. The Property shall be sold subject to all taxes, ground rents, public charges, assessments, sewer, water, drainage, and other public improvements, if any, whether assessments have been levied or not. The Noteholder and Substitute Trustees assume no liability for fuel, gas, electricity, utilities, and other operating charges accrued before or after the sale and all such charges shall be the sole responsibility of the purchaser from the date of sale. All costs incident to the settlement and conveyancing including, without limitation, examination of title, conveyancing, all recordation taxes and charges, all transfer taxes and charges, title insurance premiums, notary fees, settlement fees and all other costs incident to settlement shall be at the cost of the successful purchaser. The District of Columbia Government may impose transfer and recordation taxes on any assignment of the successful bid prior to recordation of the Substitute Trustees' Deed. The successful purchaser shall be solely liable for payment of such additional transfer and recordation taxes, if any. If the Substitute Trustees cannot convey title, the purchaser's sole remedy is a return of deposit. Further particulars may be announced at the time of sale.

Mark H. Wittstadt  
Kevin Hildebeidel  
Substitute Trustees

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Under and by virtue of the power of sale contained in that certain Filing and Security Agreement from Ring Associates L.L.C. ("Ring") to District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds ("Land Records") as Mortgage Loan Portfolio, A Series of Global Investment Fund Assignment and Assumption of Interest Under Deed of Trust Agreement dated June 24, 2024, for the benefit of Paragon Real Estate Services, LLC ("Paragon"), recorded with said Land Records as Instrument No. 2024070616 (collectively, the "Deed of Trust"), and Assumption of Interest Under Deed of Trust Assignment of all rights, title and interest in and to the real estate described in Sections 42-815 and 42-818 of the D.C. Code, the holder (or any assignee, the "Beneficiary"), having appointed John R. Smith as instrument duly executed, acknowledged and recorded among others hereinabove, has caused this Notice of Public Auction to have occurred under the terms of said Deed of Trust and Trustees will offer the following property for sale at Public Auction:

**Sale to be held at the Offices of  
4910 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20004  
On Thursday, January 11, 2024.**

**PROPERTY DESCRIPTION (the "Real Estate"):**

All of that certain lot or parcel of land, together with all improvements thereon, situated in the City of Columbia, and being more particularly described as follows:

**LOTS NUMBERED 1, 58, 59, 60 and 61 in Square numbered 1000, recorded in Liber J. H. K. at folio 179 in the Office of the Surveyor General, and the same being more particularly described as follows:**

**BEGINNING** at the Southeast corner of said Lot 1, being the Southeast corner of the intersection of the West line of Eighteenth Street and running thence North along the West line of said Lot 58; thence West along the North line of said Lot 5 along the East side of said alley, 123.40 feet to M Street; thence North along the East line of said M Street to the intersection of the East line of said M Street and the East line of said Lot 1, and thence East along the East line of said Lot 1 to the point of beginning.

Said property being now known for assessment and taxation as "Lot 1, Block 1000, Square 1000, Columbia, S.C." and such property also being known as 1200 18th Street NW, Washington, D.C.

**FIXTURES**

Pursuant to the Deed of Trust and the UCC-1 recorded in 2024070617, 20191116909, 2024058916, 2024063092 and all of the assets of Borrower and will sell at public auction or FIXTURES of Borrower located on or about the Real Estate that is not owned by any third party.

TOGETHER WITH any and all buildings, structures, improvements, including, without limitation, all equipment, apparatus, and said buildings, structures, improvements or appurtenances a thereon all as more particularly described in the Deed of Trust, any personal property owned by any tenants.

CONDITIONS OF SALE:

The Property will be sold in an "AS IS/WHERE IS" condition of any nature whatsoever. In particular, neither the Substituted Warranty with respect to, without limitation: (1) the existence of any zoning, land use, development, site plans, occupancy or particular purpose or use; (2) flood zone designations; (4) covenants and ordinances; (5) the fitness for habitation or the structure ingress, egress or access to the Property or any portion thereof parties in possession, if any, or the existence, validity, terms, or duration of the Property; (8) the existence of any security devices with Disabilities Act; or (10) the condition of the Property, environmental contamination.

Neither the Substitute Trustees nor the Beneficiary shall have the purchaser's obligation, at the purchaser's sole cost, to obtain a title insurance policy.

RISK OF LOSS, INSURABLE OR OTHERWISE, SHALL PASS TO THE BUYER OF SALE. Neither the Substitute Trustees nor the Beneficiary shall have with respect to the Property.

The Property shall be sold subject to: (1) any easements, rights of record affecting the same, including, but not limited to any plat and amendments thereto; (2) any and all disclosures as required by the Property; (3) any encroachments, overlaps, boundary line encroachments or encroachments of the Property; (4) any matters which would affect the use of the Property; (5) any environmental conditions, problems and/or violations or any buildings or improvements thereon; and (6) any and all governmental permits or approvals affecting the Property or violations, the existence of any lead paint, asbestos or radon.

**WAIVERS:**

The purchaser waives and releases the Substitute Trustees agents, successors and assigns from any and all claims the (1) any environmental condition or violation affecting all or a zoning code problems or violations, and (3) the accuracy or

**TENANCIES:**

The sale of the Property is not made subject to any tenancy ent thereto. Such tenancy(ies) shall be terminated upon foreclos

**IMPROVEMENTS:**

The Property is believed to be improved by a commercial office

**TERMS OF SALE:**

This advertisement, as amended or supplemented by any or the Substitute Trustees' entire terms upon which the Proper Trustees reserve the unqualified right to postpone the sale, time before sale or to release the Property, in whole or in part. Substitute Trustees determine that the final bid is not come and withdraw the Property from sale. If any dispute arises at and final discretion either to determine the successful bidder check made payable to either of the Substitute Trustees (or as of \$500,000.00 will be required of the purchaser at the time deposit to five percent (5%) of the bid price within five bus certified checks shall be delivered to the Substitute Trustees 900, Washington, DC 20004, Attn: John T. Farnum and shall account to be applied to the purchase price at the time of s the successful bidder, shall not be required to post a deposit at the rate of ten percent (10%) per annum on the unpaid p hereinafter specified) must be paid in cash or by certified che

All outstanding real property taxes shall be the sole responsibility of the purchaser, including, but not limited to, rents, if any, ground rents, other special assessments and utilities payable on an annual or annual basis, and shall be paid by the purchaser at settlement. The purchaser shall be responsible for all settlement costs, including, without limitation all, state and local taxes, title examination costs, title insurance premiums, and attorney's fees.

The purchaser shall settle and comply with the sale terms extended by the Substitute Trustees, their successors or assigns. If the purchaser defaults, in addition to any other legal or equitable remedies, the Substitute Trustees shall have the right to declare the entire deposit forfeited and resell the Property and the purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds or profit resulting from the sale.

Neither the Substitute Trustees, the Auctioneer or the Beneficiary shall be liable in any way for any claim or damages arising out of or in connection with this matter relating to the sale or to the Property, except that if title to the Property is sold to a third party in violation of the terms hereof for any reason, such liability is limited solely to the extent of the proceeds of the sale of the Property and to the rights or remedies against the Substitute Trustees, the Auctioneer, the Beneficiary, the Auctioneer's agents, successors and assigns, either in law or equity.

NOTE: The material contained herein describing the Proposed Project, however, no express or implied warranty is made as to the accuracy of the data herein are approximate.

For further information regarding the sale and the Property, p

JOHN T.  
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Substitut

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ertain Debt of Trust, Assignment of Leases and Rents, Fixture  
arrow") dated as of October 28, 2019, and recorded with the  
ument No. 2019117777 for the benefit of U.S. Commercial  
1, a Delaware statutory trust as affected by that certain  
Assignment of Leases and Rents, Fixture Filing and Security  
State Holdings II, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company  
058914, as further affected by that certain Assignment and  
ases and Rents, Fixture Filing and Security Agreement dated  
was limited liability company and recorded with said Landed  
de of Trust"), and that certain Notice of Foreclosure Sale of  
ebruary 4, 2024 as Instrument No.: 2024113244 pursuant  
of the indebtedness secured thereby, DIV Ring Lender, LLC  
Farnum and Addison J. Chappell as Substitute Trustees by  
the Land Records as Instrument No.: 2024112660, default  
the request of the Beneficiary, the undersigned Substituted  
tion:

**Alex Cooper Auctioneers, Inc.**  
**venue, NW, Suite 100**  
**DC 20016**  
**9, 2025 at 12:00 P.M.**

[illegible]

2024070618, Beneficiary holds a security interest and lien on the same date and at the same time and place, ALL OF THE is subject to the security interest and lien of Beneficiary and encumbrances now erected on the Real Estate and its appurtenances now erected on the Real Estate and its fixtures of any kind or character forming a part of and located in, upon or about the Real Estate and any buildings (collectively, the "Property"). The Property does not include:

- (1) compliance with any and all zoning or building laws, regulations or ordinances; (2) fitness for any purpose;
- (3) integrity or condition of any buildings or improvements; (4) whether vehicular, pedestrian or otherwise; (7) the rights of others or other matters with respect to lease of all or parts of deposits or rental payments; (9) compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, either patent or latent, of any nature whatsoever, including

any obligation to obtain possession of the Property. It shall be the responsibility of the Purchaser to obtain possession of the Property.

**PURCHASER IMMEDIATELY AND AUTOMATICALLY AT THE TIME OF CLOSING SHALL HAVE ANY OBLIGATION TO OBTAIN OR MAINTAIN ANY INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR THE PROPERTY.**

The Property is subject to all restrictions, declarations, site plans, and restrictive covenants, easements, and all condominium restrictions, declarations, bylaws and rules of the community, and all conditions on any plats of record affecting all or any portion of the Property, including boundary disputes and other matters which could be disclosed by a physical inspection of the Property. (5) The Property is also subject to all zoning laws, regulations, PUD overlays, and ordinances, including without limitation any housing or building code or any other hazardous or toxic substances).

[illegible]

sibility of the purchaser. All other taxes and assessments, other than public charges, sewer charges, water rents, regular and special assessments, shall be adjusted as of the date of the foreclosure sale. The purchaser shall pay all expenses and costs required for or incident to its purchase, including transfer taxes, documentary taxes, recording taxes and fees and the seller's fees.

within thirty (30) days after date of sale unless said period is extended by the Trustee, for good cause shown. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE.

any or its affiliates are liable individually or otherwise for any claim or damage to the Property cannot be transferred in accordance with the terms of this Agreement for the return of the purchaser's deposit. There shall be no other person or entity, other than the Seller and/or the Beneficiary or any of their respective affiliates

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SHAW, SEAN





PHOTOS BY AMBER BAESLER FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

# Feeding neighbors in need in Wyoming

Programs encourage gardeners, hunters to donate their surplus

BY JIM WEBSTER

In Wyoming, hunting is a family affair. It's about sport, sure, but it's really about sustenance. It's filling the freezer to feed the family. It's the most basic version of grocery shopping.

It's also something of a rite of passage. So when Jace Mitchell of Afton turned 12, the minimum age for hunting in the state, he was looking forward to joining his dad and older brother when they went hunting.

The first 10 or so times they went out, Jace came up empty. And that bothered him because there was another family tradition he wanted to be a part of.

Jace's mother, Sierra Mitchell, runs the Afton Food Pantry, which she established in 2016. She helps keep the vulnerable in her community fed. The Mitchells have always shared excess meat they get from the hunt with friends and neighbors, but since the state's first lady, Jennie Gordon, started a new program in 2019, wild game can be processed and distributed at food banks around the state.

Jace says he wanted to hunt to  
SEE WYOMING ON E6



TOP: Brothers Jace, left, and Gage Mitchell, 13 and 15 respectively, unload frozen game meat for patrons at the Afton Food Pantry in Wyoming. ABOVE: The boys with their mother, Sierra Mitchell, who established the food pantry in 2016.

## This seafood soup swims with flavor

Jamaican fish tea is brothy, aromatic and flexible for cook's taste

BY LUKE PYENSON

Sitting around the dinner table with my wife's family one night, I mentioned to my mother-in-law — born and raised in Kingston, Jamaica — that I wanted to learn to make fish tea, the aromatic fish soup of her home country and a favorite of her father's. Without skipping a beat, she said what became a popular refrain through all my subsequent recipe tests: "You've gotta use the head!"

Plenty of dishes from the Jamaican canon are well-known: jerk, obviously; oxtail; rice and  
SEE FISH TEA ON E3



SCOTT SUCHMAN FOR THE WASHINGTON POST  
FOOD STYLING BY CAROLYN ROBB FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

RECIPES

Fish Tea (Jamaican Fish Soup) E3

## Homebrewing is losing key ingredient: Brewers

As interest wanes and shops close, hobbyists worry about the loss of a creative community

BY COURTNEY ISEMAN

On the first Thursday in October, the only homebrew supply shop in New York City held its final homebrew swap. John LaPolla, who owned Bitter & Esters with business partner Douglas Ampert since 2011, said the event was "a love letter to our customers, and they gave the love back. It was just a giant mix of appreciation and sadness."

Ten days later, at 5:59 p.m. on the shop's last day of operation, one of those loyal customers

made the final purchase.

"People were coming in [during the final days] saying goodbye to me while I was still working," LaPolla said. "They'd say, 'How do you feel?' And I'd say, 'I don't know, I'm still finishing it.' Now, I feel untethered ... which is okay, it's another chapter in life." LaPolla said he plans to move out of the city, but first, he would attend a meeting of a local homebrew club that met regularly at Bitter & Esters, Brewminaries, for some closure.

SEE HOMEBREWING ON E4



DINNER IN MINUTES

Air fryer chicken dinner is a crispy winner. E2

HOW TO

Expand your horizons, and try carrots like this. E5

MORE AT WASHINGTONPOST.COM

Apple-Cinnamon Baked French Toast E2

Hoppin' John Online



# This air fryer chicken dinner is a winner for both casual and festive occasions



**Aaron Hutcherson**  
DINNER IN MINUTES

I've had my air fryer for about a year and a half now. Back when I was first getting acquainted with the appliance, I used it to make all sorts of things: beautifully browned vegetables, fluffy baked potatoes, extra-crispy chicken wings and even apple hand pies for dessert. But since then, I've mostly used it to reheat leftovers and prepare frozen convenience foods, such as French bread pizzas and tater tots.

Recently, I decided it was time to use my air fryer to do some actual cooking again — and this complete dinner with chicken thighs, potatoes and Brussels sprouts was born.

It's a riff on one of my go-to dinners of bone-in, skin-on chicken and vegetables seasoned with whatever spices I feel like having that evening. Except instead of a sheet pan, everything goes into an air fryer basket. While the sheet pan version is good, the air fryer iteration is even better because the appliance yields browner, crisper food.

This recipe features chicken thighs, baby or fingerling potatoes, and Brussels sprouts seasoned with herbes de Provence and garlic powder. (Herbes de Provence is a blend of dried herbs that traditionally includes rosemary, summer savory, oregano and thyme — and sometimes other seasonings, such as sage, basil, marjoram, lavender and fennel seeds.) It takes just a few minutes to toss it all together with a touch of olive oil, then just pop it in the air fryer.

For the best results, cook the chicken thighs to an internal temperature of at least 175 degrees. While 165 degrees is the government's recommended minimum temperature for safety, with dark meat, cooking it to a higher temperature results in meat that is more tender and juicy because more connective tissue breaks down.

A squeeze of lemon juice as you're about to chow down adds the right amount of brightness to make the plate that much more exciting. The result is a dinner for two that punches above its weight in deliciousness compared to how little effort it requires. It's simple enough for a regular weeknight, but it is also special enough for a date or holiday meal.



PEGGY CORMARY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST; FOOD STYLING BY LISA CHERKASKY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## Air Fryer Chicken Thighs With Potatoes and Brussels Sprouts

2 servings

This air fryer meal for two with chicken thighs, potatoes and Brussels sprouts is suitable for any occasion, including a casual weeknight or a small-scale holiday dinner. It's seasoned with herbes de Provence, a blend of dried herbs that traditionally includes rosemary, summer savory, oregano and thyme (and sometimes other seasonings, such as sage, basil, marjoram, lavender and fennel seeds).

**Storage:** Refrigerate for up to 3 days.

**Active time:** 10 mins; **Total time:** 40 mins

From staff writer Aaron Hutcherson.

### Ingredients

- 2 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs (1 to 1¼ pounds total)
- 12 ounces fingerling or baby potatoes, halved, or quartered if large
- 8 ounces Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved, or quartered if large
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon herbes de Provence

- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon fine salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- Lemon wedges, for serving

### Steps

- On the air fryer, select the air fry mode, set to 400 degrees and preheat until the appliance signals it's ready.
- In a large bowl, toss the chicken, potatoes, Brussels sprouts, olive

oil, herbes de Provence, garlic powder, salt and pepper until evenly coated. Add the Brussels sprouts and potatoes to the air fryer in an even layer. Top with the chicken, skin side down, and air fry for 10 minutes.

- Transfer the chicken to a plate, shake or stir the vegetables, and return the chicken to the air fryer basket, skin side up, arranging the vegetables around, instead of under, the thighs to allow for even cooking and browning. Air fry for 20 minutes more, or until the vegetables are tender and the chicken is brown; an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the thigh away from the bone should register at least 175 degrees. Divide the chicken and vegetables between two plates and serve hot, with lemon wedges for squeezing over.

### Substitutions

- Chicken thighs >> drumsticks

or bone-in, skin-on chicken breasts, with an adjustment to the cooking time.

- Fingerling or baby potatoes >> any kind of potatoes, cut into bite-size pieces.
- Brussels sprouts >> broccoli or cauliflower florets.
- Herbes de Provence >> any mix of dried herbs or your favorite seasoning blend.

### Notes

- This recipe was tested in an Instant Pot Vortex Plus 6-quart air fryer and a Cosori 5.8-quart air fryer. Depending on the appliance you use, you may need to adjust the cooking time and/or temperature to achieve the desired results.

Nutrition | Per serving (1 thigh plus 1½ cups vegetables): 796 calories, 39g carbohydrates, 200mg cholesterol, 54g fat, 6g fiber, 40g protein, 14g saturated fat, 756mg sodium, 6g sugar

Recipe tested by Aaron Hutcherson; email questions to [food@washpost.com](mailto:food@washpost.com)

**Search “Air Fryer Old Bay Chicken Wings” or “Air Fryer Spicy Chicken With Bacon and Dates” in our recipe archives**

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# Baked French toast is a laid-back, luxurious treat



**Ellie Krieger**  
NOURISH

The things I relish most about holiday mornings can't be seen. I love the feeling of not having to rush anywhere, lingering in my PJs as long as I want. I treasure the quiet around

me as I read the paper and sip my coffee while my husband and daughter are still asleep.

And I get immense pleasure from an extra-special breakfast cooking. Often, that holiday breakfast is some kind of overnight bake, assembled the night before, so the only thing to do in the morning is to put it in the oven. As it bakes, it fills the kitchen with warm, comforting aromas.

The overnight bake I'm sharing with you today is essentially a more healthful French toast that's thrown together the night before. It's lighter in texture and better for you than most bakes like it, but it's also hearty and satisfying.

Start by tossing bread cubes and diced apple in a baking dish. I like to use a whole-grain loaf

that's not too dense and has a nice crust, but any type of bread you like, or have left over, will work. Then, pour a mixture of eggs and milk, seasoned with a touch of maple syrup, vanilla and cinnamon, over that, cover and refrigerate it overnight, letting the bread absorb the custard.

In the morning, all that's left to do is sprinkle some chopped pecans, brown sugar and cinnamon over the top, put the bake in the oven and wait for the aroma to hit. The homey perfume of apples, cinnamon and vanilla always manages to coax my husband and daughter out of their beds.

The finished bake is a real treat, warm and silky, with tender, custardy bread lightly crisped on the outside, mingling with softened bites of apple and a crunchy, sweet, nutty topping.

Sure, the bake looks enticing, but the smell and taste of it, as well as enjoying it with those dearest to me, are the things I appreciate the most.

Krieger is a registered dietitian nutritionist, cookbook author, and cooking show and podcast host. Learn more at [elliekrieger.com](http://elliekrieger.com).



REY LOPEZ FOR THE WASHINGTON POST; FOOD STYLING BY LISA CHERKASKY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## Apple-Cinnamon Baked French Toast

8 servings (makes one 9-by-13-inch bake)

This make-ahead French toast is studded with tender, sweet chunks of apple, scented with cinnamon and showered with a crunchy pecan topping. Its aroma alone is enough to coax anyone out of bed for a warm, cozy breakfast or brunch during the holidays or whenever.

**Make ahead:** The dish needs to be assembled and refrigerated for up to 12 hours before baking.

**Storage:** Refrigerate for up to 4 days. Reheat, covered, in a 350-degree oven until warmed through.

**Active time:** 30 mins; **Total time:** 1 hour 20 mins, plus overnight refrigeration

From cookbook author and registered dietitian nutritionist Ellie Krieger.

### Ingredients

- Neutral oil, such as canola or grapeseed, or nonstick cooking spray
- 13 ounces whole-grain bread, such as a boule, cut into ¾-inch dice (8 cups)

- 2 medium Golden Delicious apples (1 pound total), cored and cut into ½-inch dice
- 8 large eggs
- 2 cups milk (any fat percentage or nondairy)
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup,

- plus more for serving
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon, divided
- ⅔ cup (2¾ ounces) finely chopped pecans
- 2 tablespoons dark brown sugar
- Pinch fine salt

### Steps

- Grease a 9-by-13-by-2-inch baking dish with oil or cooking spray. Place the bread and apples in the dish, and toss to combine. Redistribute the mixture evenly around the dish.
- In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, maple syrup, vanilla and ½ teaspoon of the cinnamon until well combined. Pour the egg mixture evenly over the bread and apples,

ensuring the liquid saturates the bread. Cover and refrigerate overnight, or for up to 12 hours.

- When ready to bake, position a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat to 350 degrees.
- In a small bowl, toss together the pecans, brown sugar, salt and remaining ½ teaspoon cinnamon until combined. Uncover the dish and sprinkle the pecan mixture evenly over the top. Bake, uncovered, for 35 to 45 minutes, or until the internal temperature of the mixture reaches 160 degrees on an instant-read thermometer, the eggs are set, and the top is crisped and nicely browned. Let sit for 5 to 10 minutes. Divide among individual plates and serve warm, with addition-

al maple syrup for drizzling.

### Substitutions

- Dark brown sugar >> light brown sugar, palm sugar or coconut sugar.
- Golden Delicious apples >> your favorite juicy, sweet apples or firm pears.
- Cinnamon >> cardamom.
- Pecans >> walnuts or your favorite nut, or sunflower or pumpkin seeds.
- Maple syrup >> honey or agave.
- Gluten-free? >> Use gluten-free bread.

Nutrition | Per serving (about 1½ cups): 357 calories, 39g carbohydrates, 191mg cholesterol, 16g fat, 6g fiber, 16g protein, 3g saturated fat, 313mg sodium, 19g sugar

Recipe tested by Olga Massov; email questions to [food@washpost.com](mailto:food@washpost.com)

FOOD

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# Fish tea’s vegetables may vary by chef, but soup’s spices are nonnegotiable

FISH TEA FROM E1

peas. But when I married into a half-Jamaican family and started visiting the island regularly, I learned an important thing: Never sleep on the soups. And while I love Jamaican chicken soup and red pea soup, there's something about fish tea that I find irresistible.

Where seafood soups and stews, such as bouillabaisse or cioppino, can feel like sticking your head in a rock pool — full of shells, chunks of fish and fishy flavor — sipping fish tea is like staring transfixed as the shadow of a fish glides by in clear blue water. The dish is named for its ample broth and because it's often served in cups. "The liquid itself remains very thin," said Riaz Phillips, the London-based British Caribbean food writer and cookbook author. "It's watery, but it's water packed with flavor."

Each trip to Jamaica brings with it my first taste of a new dish in situ — there's been glorious escovitch at Gloria's Seafood City in Port Royal; perfect patties from the local bakery in rural Trelawny; callaloo-filled steamed bao at the Chinese Jamaican supermarket in uptown Kingston.

My first serving of fish tea came at the seaside restaurant at the storied Jamaican hotel GoldenEye, in the North Coast town of Oracabessa. Chef Laire Robinson grew up along this stretch of coast with a fisherman father. At home, "we had fish tea weekly or two times a week," he told me, adding: "You might see these little kitchens on the roadside — little cookshops. Most of them are selling fish tea, especially if it's a fishing village."

GoldenEye sources all its fish from the surrounding fishing community, and the most common fish to use is doctorfish, a small, coral-reef-dwelling species. "If it's not doctorfish," Rob-

inson said, "it's got to be snapper."

Neily Bowlin, a chef from Black River, Jamaica, who manages multiple locations of Mac's Seafood market in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, likes to use the local catch when he prepares fish tea at home. "I harvest and store as much striped bass as I can," he said. "But the trick is I only use the heads and collars, because what we're shooting for is all that collagen. That's what fish tea is all about."

The echo of my mother-in-law's rule! Robinson told me the same: "Sometimes you might get a head from a barracuda or a large snapper — all that gelatin from the head gives the soup a distinct flavor."

Apart from the fish, the hard food or provisions, as various starchy vegetables are known collectively, vary from soup pot to soup pot. "The thing you'll find about Jamaica is everyone has their own recipe!" said my wife's aunt Donna Noble, a food stylist, cookbook author and organic farming pioneer who lives in the Blue Mountains. "When I make fish tea, I cheat and make it a bit more robust, so more of a soup," she said.

Phillips, in London, does the same — the recipe for fish tea in his beautiful 2022 Jamaican cookbook, "West Winds," calls for pumpkin, yam, green banana, carrot, potato, corn and more. "That starch is my preference," he said. "Any time I got it as a kid, I wanted more in my bowl."

In the first version I had at GoldenEye, which is in a parish known for its bananas, young green banana left in its skin and cut into coins was the only adornment save for carrot and the oblong flour-and-water dumplings known as spinners, which enhance most Jamaican soups. Bowlin, on Cape Cod, uses carrots, his own homegrown potatoes, and both spinners and

round dumplings (to satisfy his kids' competing preferences). Auntie Donna insists on okra and also champions chocho (chayote squash).

Despite all this variety, certain ingredients are nonnegotiable: The classic trio of scallion, thyme and whole allspice berries (called pimento seeds in Jamaica) perfume the fish stock that serves as the dish's foundation. Whole Scotch bonnet pepper is often added to gently flavor the simmering soup, and another pepper is finely chopped and sprinkled over each portion just before serving. But not too much. "Only a foolish man cries over his food," said Robinson, starting to laugh, "so it's got to be moderate."

In my own tests, I tried versions that begin with simmering a whole fish, straining it and adding the resulting stock to diced vegetables. I also tried a version that drops the fish, head and all, into the already-simmering pot full of potatoes, carrots, chayote and green plantain (my chosen vegetables).

In truth, even with the risk of bones, scales and other bits to negotiate (even after the fish is removed and the flaky flesh reintroduced), the latter version tasted best and turned into a stunning aspic in the fridge overnight, bursting with flavor the next day. "A real, authentic fish tea as Jamaicans make it — there's no straining involved. We just go for it," Bowlin told me, and I now understand what he meant.

The strained version — what I based this recipe on — doesn't lack in flavor but is more nuanced and easier to eat. I also tried making the soup with dainty fillets of local whitefish simmered in store-bought fish stock that's been doctored with thyme and allspice. It wasn't bad, but I can't endorse it — only a foolish man goes against his mother-in-law. You've gotta use the head.



PHOTOS BY SCOTT SUCHMAN FOR THE WASHINGTON POST; FOOD STYLING BY CAROLYN ROBB FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## Fish Tea (Jamaican Fish Soup)

4 servings (makes about 7 cups)

Fish tea, the aromatic fish soup of Jamaica, gets its name from a comparatively thin broth that buzzes with the perfume of allspice, thyme, scallion and Scotch bonnet pepper. From there, the dish is almost infinitely customizable — in addition to (or instead of) the ingredients listed here, the soup can include okra, yam, West Indian pumpkin, spinners (oblong flour-and-water dumplings) and more. But Scotch bonnet is key — if you can handle it, a bit of very finely chopped hot pepper added to each bowl lends an irresistible, fruit-forward spice that ties everything together.

**Make ahead:** The soup is delicious the day it is made, but its flavors develop even more the next day.

**Storage:** Refrigerate for up to 2 days.

**Where to buy:** Chayote can be found at Latin and international markets and well-stocked supermarkets.

**Active time:** 20 mins; **Total time:** 1 hour 15 mins

From food writer Luke Pyenson.

### Ingredients

- 2 bunches scallions (about 14 scallions)
- 6 cups water
- 20 sprigs fresh thyme (from 1 small bunch), divided
- One (2-inch) piece unpeeled fresh ginger
- 1½ teaspoons whole allspice
- 1 gutted, scaled and cleaned whole red snapper (1 pound)
- Fine salt
- 1 medium russet potato (10 ounces), peeled and cut into ½-inch chunks

- 1 medium carrot, peeled and cut into ½-inch chunks
- 1 small chayote squash, cut into ½-inch chunks
- 1 green plantain, peeled and sliced ½-inch thick
- 2 Scotch bonnet peppers, divided

### Steps

- Trim 4 of the scallions and place them in a wide shallow pot or skillet with tall sides; chop the remaining scallions and set aside. To the pot, add the water,



10 sprigs of the thyme, the ginger and ½ teaspoon of the allspice. Set over medium heat and bring to a simmer.

- Season the fish generously with salt, then add to the pot. Gently poach, adjusting the heat as needed to maintain a simmer, until the fish flakes easily and infuses the stock, about 20 minutes.

- About 10 minutes into the fish poaching, in a large, deep pot combine the potato, carrot, squash and plantain, along with the remaining thyme sprigs, allspice, 1 of the Scotch bonnet peppers (left whole) and half of the chopped scallions.
- When the fish is done poaching, use a thin, metal spatula to transfer it to a large plate. Set a

fine-mesh strainer over the pot with the vegetables and pour the broth through it. Season to taste with salt and bring the liquid to a boil. Reduce the heat so the broth is at a gentle simmer and cook uncovered, until the vegetables are tender and the flavors are well incorporated, about 30 minutes.

- While the soup cooks, carefully

**Poach the fish until it flakes easily and infuses the stock, about 20 minutes.**

separate the fish from the bones and return it to the pot with the broth and vegetables. (Discard or compost the bones and the whole Scotch bonnet pepper.) Taste, and season the broth with more salt as desired.

- Finely mince the remaining Scotch bonnet — use kitchen gloves or a fork to avoid touching the pepper directly. Taste a tiny piece to judge the heat level before adding to the soup.
- When ready to serve, discard the thyme sprigs and as many of the allspice berries as you can (they often gather at the surface around the sides of the pot). Ladle into bowls, garnish with the remaining chopped scallions and minced Scotch bonnet, and serve hot.

### Substitutions

- Instead of red snapper >> try using sea bass.
- Can't find Scotch bonnet peppers? >> Use habanero peppers.
- Chayote >> chopped okra or pumpkin.

Nutrition | Per serving: 317 calories, 48g carbohydrates, 42mg cholesterol, 2g fat, 6g fiber, 28g protein, 1g saturated fat, 170mg sodium, 4g sugar

Recipe tested by Alexis Sargent; email questions to food@washpost.com

# The utility of an oven thermometer: It might improve the look of your next cake

## Q&A

AARON HUTCHERSON AND BECKY KRYSTAL

Each Wednesday at noon, Post food writer Aaron Hutcherson and recipes editor Becky Krystal answer questions and provide practical cooking advice in a chat with readers at washingtonpost.com/community. Here are edited excerpts. Recipes whose names are capitalized can be found at our Recipes landing page at washingtonpost.com/recipes.

**Q:** I got an oven thermometer, and my oven checked out perfect. So now I am wondering what I might use it for besides holding onto it in case I think it's not heating right in the future or for another oven. Do you think it could take the temperature of my electric stove by placing it on a pan?

**A:** I simply leave mine in the oven to check that it stays properly calibrated. No, it should not be placed in a pan to check the temperature. (If you want to measure the temperature of a skillet, I'd use an infrared thermometer.)

— Aaron Hutcherson

**Q:** The Red Velvet Cake With Cream Cheese Frosting I made for a party last weekend was a hit! But I could tell right away I had done something wrong, since the layers were not tall and light like the picture. I still got a specific compliment on it being a nice dense cake, but what did I



SCOTT SUCHMAN FOR THE WASHINGTON POST; FOOD STYLING BY LISA CHERKASKY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**Find the recipe for Red Velvet Cake With Cream Cheese Frosting at washingtonpost.com/recipes.**

do wrong? Overmixing seems most likely from here. **A:** Yes, you could have overmixed. Another possibility is that you undercreamed the butter and sugar and didn't incorporate enough air.

— A.H.

**A:** Other possibilities — too much flour, if you didn't measure by weight. Also, if your oven was not hot enough, you won't get as

good of a rise. Use that oven thermometer to know how long your oven actually takes to get up to temp! Another reader suggests making sure your baking soda is fresh.

— Becky Krystal

**Q:** Some recipes for crepes say to chill the batter, some do not. My favorite, given to me by a French friend, says to chill, but I never have since I am always in a

hurry. And they turn out fine. (By the way, the recipe does not specify how long. 20 minutes? Overnight?) What does chilling accomplish?

**A:** The theory behind resting is that it allows the gluten in the flour to relax, leading to a more tender crepe. It also can improve the overall flavor. However, since you're usually adding some sort of flavorful filling, the difference isn't that notable.

— A.H.

**Q:** The Proper British Shortbread from Mary Berry calls for semolina. What am I looking for, and where can I find it?

**A:** It's a type of more coarsely ground flour made from durum wheat. I've gotten it at Italian specialty markets. It may be at some well-stocked grocery stores, as well. You can also use cornstarch or rice flour, which will give you a more melt-in-your mouth texture than the slight crunch from the semolina.

— B.K.

**Q:** We're having beef tenderloin for a big dinner. You published a Caramelized Onion and Miso Gravy recipe for Thanksgiving. Can I use beef broth instead of turkey broth and serve that with the tenderloin?

**A:** Yes, you can use beef broth instead.

— A.H.

**Q:** I buy pork chops from the butcher that are stuffed with raw sausage. If I cook them according to the butcher's instructions (350 degrees for 30 to 35 minutes), they do not reach a temp of 165 degrees. If I continue to cook until the sausage is 165, the pork chop is overdone. How would you suggest cooking them?

**A:** I hate to say this, but in the future, I would not recommend buying pork chops stuffed with sausage for this very reason. I would probably scrape out the

sausage and cook it in a skillet, set the sausage to the side and then sear the pork chops in the rendered fat.

— A.H.

**Q:** I read about making paneer from scratch and noticed it can be pan-fried, like halloumi. I am very fond of halloumi, but it is not much available where I live. Can I substitute paneer?

**A:** Yes! Check out our recipe for Creamy Paneer.

— B.K.

**Q:** My chicken pot pie came out too dry. Any way that I can fix it?

**A:** This is tricky. I'm not sure how to fix it without having it to deconstruct. Next time, I would try to have a bit more liquid and make sure you don't overbake. A reader says that it's possible you overcooked the roux-based sauce, making it too thick and dry.

— B.K.



Joe Yonan

WEEKNIGHT VEGETARIAN

He is away. His column will resume when he returns.



G. Daniela Galarza

EAT VORACIOUSLY

She is away. Her column will resume when she returns.



# Homebrewing helped spark the craft beer boom. Now, interest is fizzling out.

## HOMEBREWING FROM E1

The story of Bitter & Esters — the loss of both a homebrewing supplier and the community gathering place it provided — isn't unique. Over the past few years, homebrew stores have shuttered across the country, and while the exact number is difficult to pinpoint, there's anecdotal evidence in the announcements. Among the 2024 casualties: Atlantic Brew Supply in Raleigh, North Carolina; Vermont Homebrew Supply in Winooski, Vermont; and Salt City Brew Supply in Salt Lake City. In late November, My Local HomeBrew Shop in Falls Church, Virginia, became the latest, just three months shy of its 20th anniversary.

Around 540 homebrew shops appear on the American Homebrewers Association's directory, though many survive because they're also hardware stores or sell beer and wine. The business closures reflect a steep decline in homebrewing interest in the United States. The AHA's own membership is down. It had about 45,000 members between 2016 and 2019; in a 2023 year-end annual survey, it counted only 30,000. After consecutive years of underwhelming attendance at Homebrew Con, the biggest national homebrewing event held by the AHA, 2024's convention was rolled into the Great American Beer Festival while the AHA decides how to proceed.

Local homebrewing groups are also downsizing. In Southern California, SoCal Cerveceros club president Marvin Gomez says membership has dropped by 50 members to 52 over the past three years. Brooklyn's Brewminaries club still counts 130 active members, but that's also down from its peak, says president Kari Vaughn.

Where have the homebrewers gone? What does their absence say about craft beer at large, which is facing its own struggles with interest and sales? And what does a possible future look like for homebrewing and the community aspect that has long been central to its appeal?

"Homebrewing clubs provide an important social outlet," Vaughn said. "You make friends, you learn alongside each other. There's a great satisfaction that comes with DIY, especially when it's something you can then share with people."

Chris Anderson, owner of Maryland Homebrew supply shop in Columbia, says the people are what have kept her in the homebrewing world as opposed to commercialized craft beer: "I was offered different jobs in the beer industry when I was working at [Maryland Homebrew], before I bought it, but I loved this community so much I didn't want to leave it."

The drop-off in homebrewing and community spaces for it may feel sudden to longtime enthusiasts. For more than three decades, homebrewing thrived as a hobby. In 1978, President Jimmy Carter legalized the activity, which had been banned since Prohibition. The following year, Charlie Papazian founded the American Homebrewers Association. Homebrewing competitions, clubs and shops proliferated as Americans learned to make beers that weren't available on the light lager-dominated market. Several of those hobbyists went pro, opening the first contemporary craft breweries, including Ken Grossman with Sierra Nevada Brewing Company and Jim Koch with Samuel Adams.

Homebrewing continued as a farm team for the burgeoning craft beer industry. After a 2013 law change in New York enabled taprooms to exist, frequent hobby homebrewers and Bitter & Esters regulars opened their own breweries in New York: Finback Brewery in 2014, Strong Rope Brewery in 2015 and KCBC in 2016. Gomez says SoCal Cerveceros members launched California breweries Hermosa Brewing, Feathered Serpent, Brewjeria and Norwalk Brew House, among others.

Tony Bellis, co-founder of KCBC, was an integral member of the Bitter & Esters community, as he went from customer to staffer. The shop opened right as he was staying home with his newborn son and was homebrewing often, while also planning a career transition into beer. "I was *that* homebrewer walking in, 'I want to open a brewery,'" Bellis said. "John and Doug were probably like, 'Oh, sure.'" But soon, he landed his first brewing job at the now defunct Greenpoint Beer Works, and LaPolla and Amport asked if he would teach a homebrewing 101 class at the shop. "That place is really pivotal in my starting a business," Bellis said of Bitter & Esters. He also came to meet Bobby Rolandi, working retail at the shop, who has been KCBC's head brewer since the brewery opened.

Bellis sees Bitter & Esters as a driver of growth and diversity in



CLAY WILLIAMS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST



CLAY WILLIAMS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST



JUSTIN GRAZIANO/SOCAL CERVECEROS

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: John LaPolla co-owned Bitter & Esters, a New York City homebrew supply store that closed in October. But shops like his aren't just a place to buy supplies, LaPolla says; they're places for homebrewers to socialize and exchange their creations. Members of the SoCal Cerveceros (from left: Roxy Garcia, Violet Kaplan, Luis Bojorquez, Enrique Leveron and Miranda Gasca) participate in a club brew day in April 2023. Brewing implements at Bitter & Esters before it closed.**

*“Homebrewing clubs provide an important social outlet. You make friends, you learn alongside each other. There’s a great satisfaction that comes with DIY, especially when it’s something you can then share with people.”*

**Kari Vaughn,**  
president of Brooklyn's  
Brewminaries club

homebrewing and craft beer. Not only did staff and customers end up going pro, but the shop was fertile ground for inclusive homebrew clubs like Brewminaries, which grew out of the customer base. "Suddenly there were younger people homebrewing, and more women in the homebrewing scene," he said. "That ended up trickling down into the professional brewing world."

By the mid-2010s, the Brewers Association counted more than 4,000 breweries across the country, and some in the industry began to worry that craft beer's ubiquity could threaten hobby homebrewing. Anderson says while it wasn't as significant as the current decline, she saw an early drop in homebrewing activity around 2015 to 2016 compared to what she calls a heyday in 2012.

"What changed the structure of [homebrewing] ... was access," said Mike McGarvey, a co-founder of D.C.'s 3 Stars Brewing — the brewery had a homebrew shop that closed in 2020, and the entire business shuttered in 2022. "There were a handful of brewers that were well thought of but you couldn't get to ... then suddenly, people had options wherever they were."

Despite the dip, homebrewing carried on. "I was asked back then if I thought breweries would hurt my business," LaPolla said. "I thought, 'Do restaurants hurt grocery stores?' If you're into something, you want to make it."

This rang true for plenty of homebrewers, and the activity surged in the early months of the pandemic with people stuck at home. Taprooms were closed indefinitely and people were seeking busy-making activities to fill the time — alongside sourdough starters and jigsaw puzzles. Per the Associated Press, one of the best-known homebrewing suppliers, Northern Brewer, reported a 40 to 50 percent spike in sales in the first month of the pandemic. But as restrictions lifted, many of

those would-be brewers abandoned their projects just as new knitters forgot their sweater attempts.

LaPolla believes post-lockdowns, people wanted to get outside of their homes and back to enjoying food and drinks in restaurants and breweries. Now, even if their amount of discretionary spending is similar, people allocate those funds elsewhere. Some homebrewers say they are experiencing sticker shock when shopping for ingredients and deciding it's just not worth the investment. Vaughn says liquid yeast has gotten "crazy expensive," and Kendall Alvarez Eskew, owner of Jersey City homebrew shop The Thirsty Quaker, says he's noticed some suppliers have stopped selling supplies in sizes accessible to homebrewers. Sanitizing solutions no longer come in 4 or 16 ounces; Five Star's Defoamer once came in 2-ounce packages, and now Eskew can order it only by the gallon.

Longtime homebrew enthusiasts might also just be aging out. Award-winning homebrewer Annie Johnson refers to the large percentage of homebrewers over the age of 50 when she lists factors for the decline, such as "health reasons, boredom, getting serious for retirement ... the physical nature of homebrewing — even though [some things] are automated now, it's still quite physical with a lot of lifting." A 2018 AHA study found 38 percent of members were from Gen X, compared with 30 percent millennials and 28 percent boomers.

It's a generational dynamic affecting craft beer itself: Many of the old guard fans now consume less alcohol for health and lifestyle reasons. Research shows Gen Z isn't backfilling the gap — instead, they're chasing flavors across categories such as ready-to-drink cocktails and functional, nonalcoholic beverages. There's optimism about craft beer, however. Alcoholic beverage preferences tend to

be cyclic, a pattern behind amaro's recent resurgence, for example. Brewers like Brett Taylor, co-founder of Brooklyn's Wild East Brewing, point to the first craft beer industry crash, in the 1990s, during which many of the first-generation breweries folded — but plenty survived, and craft beer grew bigger than ever.

"I don't think after a 9,000-year run, beer is suddenly going to fall out of favor with people, or that Americans will decide they don't like beer that tastes like anything and just want to drink macro [brewery offerings]," Taylor said.

But how much does craft beer's future hinge on homebrewing's vitality? If people aren't homebrewing, who are tomorrow's professional brewers? They might be brewers taking different pathways. Because of the brewery boom, there are more entry-level jobs that let hopeful brewers get a foot in the door. Several universities also offer an educational springboard into brewing, McGarvey notes, pointing to the Beer Brewer Professional Certificate program at Virginia Tech and the University of Richmond.

Still, homebrewing remains a viable tool for anyone interested in going pro. McGarvey says craft beer's popularity made trade professions desirable and, even as strictly a hobby, LaPolla reasons that people often return to an interest in making things by hand, whether that's homebrewing or knitting. One such hands-on hobby is bringing a younger generation into homebrew shops right now: LaPolla, Alvarez Eskew and Anderson have had customers stocking up on supplies for mead. The fermented honey and water-based beverage with ancient roots is more accessible for beginners than beer and has been lauded for its sustainability — instructional videos have been trending on TikTok.

"You don't have to do as much cooking [to make mead], and it takes up less room," Anderson

said. She's been bringing in other supplies, too, in response to customer interest in cheese, yogurt and sourdough starters. Alvarez Eskew also stocks ingredients for making kombucha and shrubs. At a recent Brewminaries event in Brooklyn, Vaughn says members made nonalcoholic beers, ciders and hop waters, and Julia Herz, executive director of the AHA, has been using her homebrewing equipment to make cherry soda, among other beverages.

Advanced brewing technology may also be a boon for homebrewing as new at-home systems can reduce initial knowledge barriers for first-time brewers. Pinter, for example, is a tabletop setup; users simply add yeast to wort and wait for fermentation. Paul Benner, U.S. CEO of the British company, believes the streamlined system is more welcoming.

"[Homebrewing] is an expensive hobby to get into right away," he said. "It takes up a lot of space, a lot of time, a lot of commitment. The beer quality may not be great right away for new brewers, and I think people get burned out quickly." Pinter guarantees consistent results, which Benner — a longtime homebrewer himself — hopes gets more new homebrewers into the fold, even if they then move onto traditional setups.

Some shuttered shops have moved their operations online, including Minnesota-based Northern Brewer, More Beer and Craft A Brew. But while user-friendly at-home kits and online retail options may appeal to Gen Z, these won't replace what many consider to be homebrewing's greatest benefit.

"Online, the community space is lost," Bellis said. "Bitter & Esters was a space for homebrewers to get together, do bottle shares, swap ideas — that's going to be a big miss. Because what homebrewing is all about is sharing the thing you make with other people, getting their feedback and seeing their enjoyment."



HOW TO

# At the root of it all: Here are great ways to prepare carrots

BY ANNA LUISA RODRIGUEZ

As we lean into the winter months, our reliance on hearty root vegetables returns. We love them in all of our favorite comfort dishes, and they are stalwart staples of holiday tables. But they're not all treated equally.

While potatoes get all the glory, celebrated in their many forms and lauded as one of the best bits of the meal, carrots are often relegated to supporting roles. They round out mirepoix and are served as sides, but rarely do they get the spotlight treatment. We think it's time for carrots to take center stage and get the time and attention that they deserve.

Classic, no-fuss methods are great to have in your back pocket, like boiling carrots in salted water for 8 to 10 minutes and mixing with melted butter, or roasting them tossed in olive oil, salt and pepper at 400 degrees for 45 minutes. But when you're ready to start expanding your flavor and texture horizons with carrots, these tips and recipes will guide you. Recipes with capitalized names can be found at [washingtonpost.com/recipes](https://www.washingtonpost.com/recipes).

### Carrot tops

While carrots in the United States are often sold without their leafy tops, you can find them in their unaltered form at farmers markets and some supermarkets. If you're lucky enough to land a bunch, don't throw away the greens! Their earthy, herbaceous flavor works well when blended up in sauces and condiments. Honey-Roasted Carrots With Carrot-Top Chimichurri uses the whole carrot, top to tip, replacing parsley with the green tops.

Or if you're using your carrots for another dish, save the tops and make vibrant Carrot Top Pesto from Nourish columnist Ellie Krieger, "which also includes basil leaves for a layer of sweet, floral essence to balance the earthy flavor of the carrot greens." Toss it with pasta, spread it on sandwiches and spoon it over your favorite dishes.

The greens won't stay fresh for more than a few days — especially after they're removed from the root — so also consider freezing them with vegetable scraps (that also includes carrot peels) to make a homemade Scrappy Vegetable Broth.

### Raw

Plain raw carrot sticks and baby carrots are a great, simple snack, especially when served with dips such as ranch dressing, hummus or spicy peanut sauce. And of course they're famously a refreshing accompaniment to spicy Buffalo Wings.

You can also use raw carrots to add textural interest and earthy sweetness to salads, slaws and more. Dicing them adds a firm bite to dishes with softer textures, such as a Brown Rice Salad With Carrots, Scallions and Baked Tofu and Wheat Berry and Lentil Salad With Carrots, Parsley and Harissa. For a lighter crunch, try grating carrots in Grain Salad With Carrot, Herbs and Sesame Seeds. Or you can use Kohlrabi and Apple Salad as an opportunity to practice your juliennening skills.

To add a little extra oomph to the carrots while still preserving their crisp, raw texture, try quick-pickling them in a vinegar-based brine and serving them as accompaniments for Flank Steak Gyros or



REY LOPEZ FOR THE WASHINGTON POST; FOOD STYLING BY LISA CHERKASKY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

### Hot Dog Banh Mis.

#### Pureed

If you have an abundance of carrots, one of the easiest ways to use them up is by simmering them until tender and blending them into soup. But while few things are as comforting as a bowlful of creamy soup in the colder months, some people shy away from the flavor and texture of pureed vegetables. To combat this aversion, try pairing the carrots with bold, savory flavors, like in Carrot Cashew Soup With Miso and Sesame. Miso provides an umami boost while garlic and ginger give a bright, aromatic note. Another way to jazz up a creamy soup is by garnishing with a crunchy topping — Carrot Soup With Toasted Spices and Pecans uses toasted nuts to contribute a contrasting texture.

Pureed carrots also make an excellent foundation for sauces and dressings. Combining puree with vegetable broth gives Almost No-Stir Caramelized Carrot Risotto a seasonal twist and a hint of sweetness. And instead of leaning on carrots for their crunch in a salad, try transforming them into a bright dressing with Carrot-Ginger Dressing.

#### Roasted

Roasting carrots is a go-to method for a reason. Beyond being simple, "roasting mellows and deepens a vegetable's flavors, caramelizes it outside and keeps it tender and moist inside," Krieger writes in her recipe for Sweet and Spicy Roasted Root Vegetables. Her Simply Splendid Roasted Vegetables, featuring carrots, beets and Brussels sprouts seasoned with balsamic



TOM MCCORKLE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST; FOOD STYLING BY GINA NISTICO FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Find the recipe for Carrot Top Pesto at [washingtonpost.com/recipes](https://www.washingtonpost.com/recipes).

vinegar and thyme, make a colorful, foolproof side for any holiday table. Her Roasted Vegetable Trio, with cauliflower and red bell pepper, is another winning combination.

If you want to take your roasted carrots to the next level, there's no better place to start than with Roasted Carrots With Ayib and Awaze Vinaigrette. It's a recipe that's a little more involved than other sides — before you roast the carrots with orange slices, you prepare a spiced brown butter and make your own soft cheese from whole milk and lemon juice. But time and effort

is rewarded with a vibrant, spicy dish that will steal the spotlight from the main course.

#### Stir-fried

Carrots are often featured in stir-fries, and for good reason. High temperatures transform carrots, bestowing them with a slightly browned, crisp exterior and a tender — but not completely soft — interior. Since stir-frying entails intense heat and speedy cooking, you'll want to make sure the carrots are cut into thinner coins, such as in Spicy Carrot and Asparagus Stir-Fry, or matchsticks, such as in Vegetable Stir-

Fry With Honey-Ginger Sauce, to ensure that they aren't still raw.

#### Braised

Braising carrots leaves them with a tender texture and imbues them with the flavors they've been bathing in. Adding a touch of sweetness from honey or maple syrup and reducing the braising liquid gives the vegetable a delicious, sticky glaze, as seen in Miso-Orange Glazed Carrots and Smoky-Sweet Glazed Carrots. If you prefer a silkier, more buttery sauce, try Butter-Braised Carrots and Fennel With Orange Zest.

Braised carrots can also add

heft and flavor in soups, stews and pot roasts. Slower-cooking dishes, such as Anthony Bourdain's Boeuf Bourguignon or a Beer-Braised Pork and Carrot Stew, allow time for bigger chunks of carrot to cook through without turning into mush. Using a multicooker can expedite the cooking process, though, as in Instant Pot Beef Stew. For an option that uses the oven, there's Wine-Braised Pot Roast, and for faster, weeknight recipes, lean on Winter Vegetable Soup With Miso or Nikujaga, a hearty Japanese beef and potato stew.

#### Desserts and baked goods

Carrots' natural sweetness makes them an excellent candidate for baked goods and other sweets. There's the classic Carrot Cake With Brown Butter-Cream Cheese Frosting, which assistant recipes editor Olga Massov notes is "sufficiently (but not overly) caroty and moist." If you love carrot cake flavors but are looking for a different spin, try Carrot Cake Roll. For a healthier alternative, there are also Carrot Cake Muffins With Maple Cream Cheese Frosting, which use whole-grain flour and applesauce to add a nutritious twist.

If you're searching for a dessert that's even more carrot-forward, look no further than Carrot Halwa, a sweet South Asian pudding. Coarsely grating carrots and cooking them in spiced sweetened condensed milk leaves them silky and syrupy.

For a baked item that can go either sweet or savory, this Carrot Bread is ideal. Use it to make a chicken salad sandwich, or spread a pat of butter on a warm slice and drizzle with honey.

## WINE RECOMMENDATIONS

As we celebrate the new year, here are three top-notch sparkling wines primed to make 2025 bubbly and full of cheer.

—Dave McIntyre

#### GREAT VALUE

##### Kila Cava

★★★★☆

Penedes, Spain, \$17

This tasty cava offers flavors of apples and peaches carried on a steady bead of bubbles. Lees aging of 18 months gives it some complexity, compared with the minimum of nine months for basic cava and 15 months for reserva. Organic, vegan. Alcohol by volume: 12 percent. Bottle weight: 925 grams (Sparkling).

Imported by Fine Estates from Spain. Distributed locally by Prestige Ledroit.

##### Thibaut-Janisson Blanc de Chardonnay

★★★★☆

Virginia, \$45

This is the wine that helped convince skeptics in the wine and restaurant trade that Virginia could indeed produce world-class vino. Champagne-native Claude Thibaut

has also helped spark other wineries in the Old Dominion now producing quality bubbly. This one remains the tête de cuvée for Virginia, with its soft texture and flavors of apples, peaches, ginger and brioche. The suggested retail price has climbed to \$45, but it's usually much less expensive, and Total Wine & More's website lists it at \$29. ABV: 12.5 percent. BW: 945 grams (Sparkling).

Distributed locally by Elite Wines.

##### Schramsberg Blanc de Noirs Brut 2020

★★★★☆

California, \$45

Schramsberg made history in 1972 when President Richard Nixon took cases to Beijing to serve to Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai. The winery is still going strong in its second generation, as this blanc de noirs attests. Made primarily from pinot noir, it brims with crisp flavors of tart cherries, raspberries and cranberries, with a lingering finish that becomes more pronounced as the wine warms. ABV: 12.8 percent. BW: 900 grams (Sparkling).

Distributed locally by Breakthru Beverage

Group.

Prices are approximate. For availability, check [Wine.com](https://www.wine.com), [Wine-searcher.com](https://www.wine-searcher.com) and the websites and social media feeds of the wineries, importers, distributors, and your favorite local wine store. You can also ask your local retailer to order wines from the distributors listed. Bottle weight is included, because this is the single most important contributor to wine's carbon footprint. Have wine questions for Dave McIntyre? Send them to [Food@washpost.com](mailto:Food@washpost.com).

#### Legend

★ Good: The wine delivers what it promises at a fair price. If it says chardonnay, it tastes like chardonnay.

★★ Excellent: A wine with character and added interest. May elevate your eyebrows at the first sip.

★★★ Extraordinary: An exciting wine that stands out from others in its class. Fist-pumping, table-thumping good.

★★★★ Sublime: Otherworldly. May have you thinking, "So this is what they were talking about."



REY LOPEZ FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

FROM LEFT: Kila Cava; Thibaut-Janisson Blanc de Chardonnay; Schramsberg Blanc de Noirs Brut 2020.





A buck and fawn mule deer graze near Afton, Wyoming. The Food From the Field program allows hunters to donate legally hunted animals to a participating processor, who sends the meat to food banks.

# Wyo. hunters, gardeners donate surplus to feed the hungry

WYOMING FROM E1

follow in the footsteps of his dad as a hunter, and also those of his mother in helping feed their neighbors.

He's 13 now and can still tell the story of his first successful hunt like it was yesterday. And maybe he will always tell the story with as much excitement, which comes through the screen on our video call.

He was sitting on a hill on public land near Shale Hollow, about 25 miles from his home and nearly on the border with Idaho. He was with his dad, Mike, and older brother, Gage, now 15.

It was about 9 a.m. and they had been hunting for about an hour and a half when they spotted eight elk walking on the next hill over, about 200 yards away.

Tradition dictates that a group of hunters allows the newest among them to take the first shot in such scenarios. So, on the last day of the season, Mike and Gage waited as Jace lifted his Tikka 243 hunting rifle to his shoulder, fixed his gaze through his scope, aligning the weapon on the elk at the top of the group. He slowly squeezed the trigger and ... he was no longer an unsuccessful hunter.

When Gordon was traveling around the state in 2018, campaigning for her husband Mark's gubernatorial run, she heard a lot of stories about people who were working to feed hungry kids in their community. Gordon comes from a family of 10 kids, and her mother grew up in Austria during World War II, so that struck a chord with her. She knows about food insecurity.

Her husband won the race, and as the state's first lady, she decided her focus would be fighting hunger in the state. She started the Wyoming Hunger Initiative, an umbrella for a number of programs that aim to get people fed, with the initial intent to feed hungry children.

But Gordon's experience told her that if there is a hungry child, there is a hungry family. So when the pandemic hit, the goal expanded to include anyone who needed it.

There are grants to food pantries and soup kitchens. There is a program that lets farmers donate cattle to the cause. But the most interesting programs are the ones that empower the hunters and gardeners of Wyoming — which seems like almost everyone — to help feed their neighbors.

Those programs are called Food From the Field and Grow a Little Extra. Jace Mitchell's elk went to the Food From the Field program, which allows hunters to donate legally hunted animals to a participating processor, who sends the meat to food banks and other distribution points. Grow a Little Extra does the same thing, but with excess produce grown by back-



**ABOVE: Volunteer Evin Wells sets up a table outside the food pantry in Afton. RIGHT: Student volunteer Matt Heywood pulls game meat from the freezer at the food pantry. The Food From the Field program got more than 17,000 pounds of meat to distribute across Wyoming in 2023.**



yard gardeners.

Wyoming is a very large state with a very small population; supermarkets are few and far between. If you spend any amount of time outdoors — and almost everyone here does — you're going to see wildlife. A lot of wildlife. Herds of antelope, deer and elk are everywhere.

And for many people, those animals are much, much closer than the grocery store. Hunting is part of the culture.

Like Sierra Mitchell, many hunters would give away extra game meat they had hunted. But that benevolence had to be grassroots; game meat couldn't be sold or distributed by any official means, including at food banks.

Gordon didn't want to tell anyone how to do things differently; she just wanted to use her position to make their good intentions

more effective and efficient. So she created the initiative and got input from people around the state on ways she could streamline their efforts. (Mark Gordon's time as governor will end with the next election, but the initiative will continue. It was recently granted 501(c)(3) status and will go on after the Gordons leave the governor's mansion.)

When a hunter gets a permit, harvesting the meat for food is part of the agreement. Literature about Food From the Field comes with it. The program got more than 17,000 pounds of meat to distribute across the state in 2023, and a total of almost 52,000 pounds since 2020. Hunters can take their animal to one of the dozen or so processors in the state, where it is tested for safety, processed and packaged in two-pound containers, then frozen

and distributed.

And that's just the meat. Isaiah Smith's home is just a few blocks from the state capitol in Cheyenne. Most of his neighbors have nicely landscaped lawns. But in a small strip on the side of his corner lot, Smith is growing raspberries, asparagus, beans, kohlrabi and tomatoes.

Smith isn't a typical gardener. He's the horticulture supervisor at the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens. So you might think that he has some inside information on how to grow things in the state's relatively short growing season. But he insists that this is his lazy garden. He puts a lot of effort into the gardens at work; at home, he swears he just plants things and then hopes he remembers to water them often enough.

But on a quick tour of the plot in late summer, Smith shows me the

pumpkins he's growing. There are at least six under a huge canopy of leaves. As I step back to admire the size of the plant, I bump into one of his four raised beds. It's full of cabbages, at least a dozen heads. They're a small variety, a little bigger than a softball. Smith says that his family will need only about four of them. But it didn't make any sense to grow just four. So he has extra. That theme plays out with every crop he has going in the yard. There's extra of everything.

Planting more than you need is an insurance policy against the whims of nature: the weather, critters, birds and bugs, to name a few. It takes almost no additional effort to grow 12 instead of four. If things go right, you're going to end up with more than you need.

None of it has to go to waste. Whatever Smith harvests and doesn't eat or preserve will go to work with him. The botanic garden is a drop-off spot for the Grow a Little Extra program. Gardeners bring their excess harvest to designated spots around the state to donate them. They are then distributed to local nonprofits that get the produce to people who need it.

In 2021, the program collected just over 10,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables. In 2023, the haul was more than 27,000 pounds.

When Smith stands outside in his garden, lazily watering, he often fields questions from his neighbors. They want to know what it takes to get this kind of production out of a small fraction of their property.

He can't stress enough how little effort he puts into all the food he's growing.

"I tell them that if they see it growing here, they can grow it."

With that assurance, Smith encourages them to try to grow anything that interests them, and possibly grow too much. Because if their harvest exceeds their needs, he knows a place they can donate any extra.

Back on the other side of the state, about six hours from Cheyenne and within six miles of the Idaho border, Sierra Mitchell was showing initiative before there was an initiative.

She started her pantry to help the people in her community who struggled to get enough food. The building was offered to her free, and she started with \$1,000 and 102 cans of green beans in donations.

"If you see a need, start small," Mitchell said. "But start somewhere."

Four years later, she got an email from Jennie Gordon. Gordon had seen a story about the pantry and wanted to meet. Mitchell was already doing the kind of thing that Gordon envisioned. The first lady's interest generated more interest: from the media, local politicians and donors. More food came into the pantry. More freezers helped save inventory. Mitchell even got a geodome built on the grounds, extending the growing season for the fresh produce they give away.

Gordon asked Mitchell to be on the Hunger Initiative's board. It's easy to see why: Her enthusiasm for helping is contagious. Mitchell demurred a bit, but accepted.

"I'm just a stay-at-home mom, and it's just a box of food," she says she told Gordon.

Gordon corrected her: It's much more than a box of food. It's hope.

Mitchell, now 37, and her team of fellow volunteers — which includes her sons — keep the shelves stocked with donations. Before the Food From the Field program, the cost of meat made stocking protein difficult. But with wild game on the table, there is now a steady stream.

When a local hunter that Mitchell knows donates an animal, she invites them to the pantry to help distribute it. She wants the hunter to see the impact of their effort.

Her oldest, Gage, has donated for the past four years: two elk, an antelope and a deer. When Jace got his first elk, it yielded 114 pounds of meat. That one animal provided enough meat for two weeks at the pantry.

Mitchell says that elk is an acquired taste — they eat a lot of sagebrush, and you can tell — but many pantry patrons tell her they have acquired it and prefer the game meat to farmed beef. It tastes like home, they tell her.

It tastes like Wyoming.